Aqua Cœlestis:

OR,

A SOVERAIGNE CORDIAL,

Extracted from the Sufficiency of Divine Grace,

AND

Strength made perfect in Weakneſſe.

Serving to bear up a drooping Spirit under the ſaddeſt and ſoreſt Conflicts.

By *JOHN BRINSLEY*,
Miniſter of the Goſpel in the Town of Great *Yarmouth.*

PROV. 31. 6.
Give ſtrong drink to him that is ready to periſh, and Wine to thoſe that be of heavy hearts.

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To all that love
The Lord JESUS CHRIST
in Sincerity,

Within the Town of
Great YARMOUTH,
Grace and Peace.

(Much esteemed in the Lord)

IT *is the Character which we find given of* Joses, *Acts* 4. 36. *that he was* the Son *of* Consolation, *upon which account he was by the Apostles sirnamed* Barnabas, *a word importing the same thing.* A title of Honour *given unto him, not onely for his* liberality, *wherewith he was ready to comfort needy Christians, but probably, and chiefly, for his eminent* abilities, *which either he then had, or* * *should have; in* comforting afflicted consciences, *to whom also (being a* Levite, *a* Minister) *he was ready, as occasion was, in his teaching to minister a word of Consolation. And such all the* Ministers *of Christ either are, or ought to be; as* Boanerges's (*a sirname given by our Saviour to the two Sons of* Zebedee, *two of his Apostles,*

* *Apostoli ei hoc nomen dederant in omen doni Prophetici,* Grot. Anotat. in loc.

James *and* John *his Brother*, *Mark* 3. 17.) Sons of thunder, *preaching powerfully and vehemently, thundring out the threatnings of the* Law *against the transgressors of it*; *So* Barnabas's, Sons of Consolation, *able and ready to speak comfort to whom comfort belongeth, which is one, and a chief part of their office to do.* Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God; Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, *&c.* (*a Speech directed in special to the* Prophets *of God*) *Isa.* 40.1,2. *And such a one it hath been my desire and indeavour in my Ministerial service amongst you, to approve my self unto God and you: And my desire yet is, that I might be further serviceable to you in the same way. To which end, having revised what* Anno 1646. *was divers years since held forth to some of you from the* Pulpit, *and finding it a very sweet and useful* Subject, *I do here* (*not without some* Alterations *and* Additions) *present it to your view. I have entitled it* Aqua Coelestis, *a* Cordial Water, *distilled and dropped from* Heaven, *issuing out of the Mouth of him, who is* (*as the Apostle stileth him, Rom.* 15. 5.) Ὁ Θεὸς τῆς παρακλήσεως, The God of Consolation. *And I have withal intimated unto you for what end it properly serveth, viz.* to bear up drooping Spirits

Spirits under the saddest and sorest Conflicts. *And such use I shall advise and desire you, who finde your selves to stand in need of such a* Cordial, *to make of it.* Conflicts, *in some kind or other, you must make account to meet with. And your spirits being in themselves weak, you will have need of somewhat to support them. Which not finding upon* earth, *your onely way is to look up to* heaven *for it. Now from thence you cannot expect ought that may be useful to you in this way, but what is held forth to you in this one word,* Grace. *To this it is that you owe what ever you have, or are; and upon this you depend for whatever you hope for. By this it is that you were, before you were,* Elected, *and afterwards* Redeemed. *By this it is that you are* Justified, Adopted, *and* made accepted in the beloved. *By this it is that you are* Sanctified *here, and shall be* Glorified *hereafter, all being streams flowing from this one fountain,* issues of grace *(as you have it fully declared by the Apostle in that one Chapter, Eph.* 1.) *And by the help and assistance of this it is that you must be* supported *in your journey to heaven, and carried on through the whole course of your* Active *and* Passive *obedience. Which being of such an universal concernment for*

your

your Spiritual and Eternal Welfare, my deſire is, that your eyes may ever be fixed upon it, ſo as making ſure your intereſt in it, you may upon all occaſions have recourſe unto it for the ſupply of your wants; bringing *your* Pitchers *to the* Well (*as that Woman of* Samaria *did hers to* Jacobs, *Joh.* 4. 7.) *and* leaving *them there* (*as ſhe did hers*, *v.* 28.) *which whileſt you do, be you comfortably aſſured, that, being* empty veſſels (*as hers was*) *they ſhall be* filled. *Being ſenſible of your own wants and weakneſſes, Come, and* Come boldly (*as the Apoſtle directs and exhorts*, *Heb.* 4. ult.) to the throne of Grace, that you may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in the time of need. *Which whileſt you do in the name of* Jeſus *Chriſt*, by whom you have acceſſe by faith unto this grace wherein you ſtand (*as* Paul *tells his* Romans, *Rom.* 5. 2.) *Now doubt not of receiving that* Spirit of grace (*which* God, *your* heavenly Father *is more ready to* give to thoſe that ask him, *then* earthly Parents *are to give good gifts unto their* children (*as your Saviour aſſures you*, *Luke* 11. 13.) *for the ſupporting and ſtrengthening of you*; *ſo as by the aſſiſtance thereof you ſhall be inabled, not onely to* ſtand, *but to* walk *on in your way* (*as* Elias *did*

did in his for forty dayes together, after he had taken that little viaticum, *that ſmall repaſt which the* Angel *had directed him to do,* 1 *King.* 19. 8.) going from ſtrength to ſtrength, *until you ſhall come to* appear before your God in Sion, *until* Grace, *being perfected, ſhall be ſwallowed up of* glory. *Which that you may do, and find, as it hath been, ſo it is, and ſhall be, the inceſſant Prayer of*

Great Yarmouth
Anno 1663.
M. 1. D. 1.

Your ſtill and ever devoted
Servant in the Lord

JOHN BRINSLEY.

AQUA COELESTIS,

OR

A Soveraigne Cordiall:

Extracted from the ſufficiency of Divine Grace; and Strength made perfect in weakneſs.

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2 Cor. 12. 9.

And he ſaid unto me, My Grace is ſufficient for thee; for my ſtrength is made perfect in weakneſs.

Coherence.

WE have here a *Return of Prayer*, *Gods Anſwer* to his ſervant *Pauls Petition*. So it was, *Paul* having received *abundance of Revelations* (as the Verſe next but one before the Text hath it) ὑπερβολὴν τῶν ἀποκαλύψεων, therein far exceeding and excelling all others his contemporaries,

he was thereby in danger (as he ſaith) of being *exalted above meaſure*, inordinately lifted up in himſelf. Hereupon the Lord, as a wiſe and careſull *Phyſician*, for the preventing of this dangerous *Tympany* of ſpiritual pride, applies unto him a ſharp *Corroſive*, exerciſing him with ſome ſore and grievous Affliction; which himſelf in a *Metaphorical* way there deſcribes. [*There was given to me a thorn in the fleſh.*] Σκόλοψ τῇ σαρκί, ſome great trouble and diſquietment, either in his *Body* or *Minde*, which was to him like a thorn, or ſplinter in his ſide, very pungent and vexatious. [*The Meſſenger of Satan to buffet me.*] Ἄγγελος Σατᾶν. *Angelus Satan*, or *Satanæ*; either the *Angel Satan*, Satan himſelf, a malignant ſpirit haunting and vexing him with his Temptations; or *the Angel the meſſenger of Satan* (as our Tranſlation renders it) ſome wicked Inſtrument, (ſuch as *Hymeneus* or *Alexander the Copperſmith*; of the latter of which we find *Paul* complaining that he had done him *much evil*. 2 Tim. 4. 14. and ſo is by *Chryſoſtome*, and ſome others conceived here to have a ſpecial eye at) who created unto him a great deal of trouble and vexation. Now in this condition the ſervant of God betaketh himſelf to his prayers, making his *Addreſs* to the throne of grace, making it his earneſt requeſt unto God, that he would work a deliverance for him, by putting an end to this his diſquietment. And this he doth again and again, (as the verſe following hath it;) *For this thing I beſought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me.*] Τρὶς παρεκάλεσα; *Thrice*, either

Paul's Conflict.

His Petition.

ther at three ſeveral ſet times, as our *Saviour* is ſaid to have done in his *Agony*, *Matth.* 26. 44. or, *oftentimes*, ſo the word is vulgarly uſed. *Terque quaterque*, *thrice* and *four times*, that is, often. And ſo we find *Elihu* in *Job* uſing it, Job 33. 29. *Lo all theſe things worketh God oftentimes with man*;] *Biſque terque* (ſaith *Tremellius*,) *twice* and *thrice* (as our Margin hath it,) פעמים שלש or *Vicibus tribus*, (as *Montanus* renders it according to the Original) *three times*, that is, *often*; a certain number put for an uncertain (which is frequent in Scripture.) And ſo it may fitly be here looked upon. *Paul* beſought the Lord *thrice*; frequently and earneſtly, importuning the throne of grace. Now ſo doing, the Lord was pleaſed at the length to return unto him this gracious Anſwer [*And he ſaid unto me*; *My grace is ſufficient for thee*, *for my ſtrength is made perfect in weakneſs.*

Numerus ternarius ſymbolum eſt multitudinis. C. Lap. in Text.

In which words we may take notice of two things, 1. The *Anſwer* it ſelf. 2. The *Reaſon* of that Anſwer: The *Anſwer* it ſelf, [*And he ſaid unto me*, *My grace is ſufficient for thee.*] The *Reaſon* of that Anſwer; *For my ſtrength is made perfect in weakneſs.* Deal with them ſeverally, beginning with the former.

Diviſion.
God's Anſwer.
The Reaſon of it.

The *Anſwer* it ſelf, which is here returned. Which I ſhall look upon two wayes, firſt in a *general*, then in a *particular* way. In a *general* way, as *an Anſwer*; In a *particular* way, as *this Anſwer*. More briefly of the former of theſe, though in it ſelf a very uſeful conſideration, and not to be paſſed by.

Part 1. The Anſwer looked upon two wayes.

And he said unto me.] Ἐιρηκέ μοι; How, and in what way God said this unto him, whether in an *Extraordinary* way, by *Vision*, *Revelation*, *Oracle*; by an audible voice from heaven (as he spoke to him at his first Conversion, when he was going towards *Damascus*, Act. 9. 4.) or by the ministry of an *Angel*, *Angelus consolatorius*, such a one as was sent to our Saviour, to comfort and strengthen him in the depth of his Agony, *Luke* 22. 43. Or whether onely in an *Ordinary* way, by the secret instinct of the Spirit, making this impression upon his heart and spirit, whilst he was praying, bringing this comfortable meditation to his remembrance, it is a Question that, as it is not agreed upon, so neither cannot it be determined. So I find it, and so I shall leave it; looking upon it (as *Calvin* doth) as not being of that importance, that it should be worth the contending about. As for the thing it self, that is clear; *Paul* upon his *perseverance in prayer* receiveth an *Answer*, a *gracious Answer* from his God.

1. In a general way, as an Answer.

Oraculóne babuerit hoc responsum, incertum est, neque magnopere refert. Calvin in Text.

Obs. Importunate prayer shall receive an Answer from God.

And *such success shall the like perseverance and importunity ever meet with.* However for a time God may seem to lend a deaf ear to the prayers of his people, (which sometimes he doth, as the Psalmist complaineth of it, Psal. 80. 4. *O Lord God of hosts, how long wilt thou be angry against the prayer of thy people*;] God deferring to answer their prayers, they apprehend it as a token of his anger) yet, as he always *heareth* them, *O thou that heares prayer* (saith *David* to his *God*) Psal. 65. 2. so in due time he will

will answer them. This *David* was confident of as to himself; *In the day of trouble* (saith he) *I will call upon thee, for thou wilt answer*, Psal. 86. 7. And so as to others; *He will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer*. Psal. 102. 17. Such respect he had to his *natural Son*, the Lord *Jesus*; He praying thrice, *was heard in that which he feared* (as the Apostle tells us) *Heb.* 5. 7. And like respect he hath to his *Adopted* children; they praying, and continuing in Prayer, he will hear and answer them.

Reas. This standeth with Gods 1. Graciousness.

And it is no other then what standeth both with his *graciousness* and *faithfulness* to do.

1. With his *Graciousness*. *The Lord merciful and gracious*; (so he proclaimes himself,) Exod. 34. 6. *The Lord is gracious, and full of compassion* (saith the Psalmist,) Psal. 111. 4. And being so, this inclines him to hearken to the prayers of his people. *It shall come to pass, when he cryeth unto me, that I will hear, for I am gracious*, (saith the Lord, speaking of such as were fallen into the hands of cruel oppressors, mercilesse exactors.) Exod. 22. 27. *A gracious Prince* will be ready to receive the Petitions of his distressed Subjects, and receiving them to answer them. And the like will God be ready to do for his loyal and faithful Subjects. They making their addresses unto him in their straits and necessities, he will be ready to hear and answer their Petitions, affording them such succour and relief as he shall see fitting and expedient for them. Which should he not do, he might seem *to forget*

himself, being unmindfull of this Attribute. *Hath God forgotten to be gracious* (saith *David* (or *Asaph*) speaking of Gods deferring to return answer to his prayers) *Psal.* 77. 9. This is a thing which God cannot do.

2. Faithfulness. 2. And being gracious, he is also *faithful*. *Knowing therefore that the Lord thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth Covenant and mercy with them that love him &c.* Deut. 7. 9. *God is faithful.* 1 Cor. 1. 9. What ever *man* be, or do, yet *God* is and will be faithful. *If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful, he cannot deny himself*; 2 Tim. 2. 13. And being so, he will hear and answer the prayers of his people, such as are in Covenant with him. It is the Argument which *David* makes use of to move his *God* to do that for him; Psal. 143. 1. *In thy faithfulness answer me, and in thy righteousness.*] In thy *faithfulness*, according to thy promise; and in thy *righteousness*, according to the equity of my cause. So it is, God hath engaged himself by *Promise* to hear and answer the prayers of his people. *He shall call upon me, and I will answer him*; Psal. 91. 15. *It shall come to passe, that before they call I will answer, and while they are yet speaking I will hear*,] it is the Promise which the Lord maketh to his people in Gospel times, *Isa.* 65. 24. They shall not be so forward to crave as I to grant, nor so ready to ask, as I to hear, and answer. Many such Promises we meet withal in the Book of God. Now these Promises being passed, it standeth with Gods faithfulness to make performance of them. And upon that account

account he will not suffer his people to lie too long under their burdens, or to be overburdened by them. *God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able* (so *Paul* telleth his *Corinthians*) 1 Cor. 10. 13. But he will hear their prayers, and answer them. *He is faithful that promised*, Heb. 10. 23.

Thus you see that it is so, and why it is so. *God* being *Gracious* and *Faithful*, as his graciousness inclines him, so his faithfulness (as we may say) bindes him to do the like for other of his faithful servants, which here he doth to this his Apostle; in his time to return an *Answer*, and a *gracious Answer* to their Prayers.

Use 1. Comfort in Affliction for Praying Christians.

Which (to make some *Application* of it briefly) let it serve to buoye and bear up the hearts and spirits of all the Lords people under what ever affliction or suffering God shall please to exercise them with. They being a *praying people*, let them know they have to deal with a God that heareth prayer. *O thou that hearest prayer!* (saith the Text fore-cited, *Psal.* 65. 1.) And hearing them he will *answer* them. Such were not the *Gods* of the *Heathen*. *They have ears, but hear not*, (saith the Psalmist speaking of their *Idols*) Psal. 115. 6. Cry never so long, or loud, to them, yet still they are deaf and dumbe. So was *Baal* to his Prophets, (as we have the Story:) 1 Kings 18. *They called on the name of Baal from morning even untill noon; saying, O Baal hear us; but there was no voice, nor any that answered*, v. 26. Yea notwithstanding they cryed, and *cryed aloud, and cut themselves after their*

manner with knives and launcers, till the blood gushed out upon them, (as the 28. v. hath it,) thinking thereby to move compassion in that their God, yet they hear not from him. Such was the success of their *morning sacrifice*. And no better was it with their *evening* (as it there followeth) v. 29. *And it came to pass when the midday was past, and they prophesied until the time of the offering of the evening Sacrifice, that there was neither voice, nor any that answered, nor any that regarded.* There was no manner of evidence whereby any might discern that their God heard them. He was deaf and dumb to them, but so was not *Elijahs God* to him, as we find it in the sequel. *Elijah* making his prayer unto him, *v.* 36, 37. he presently returns him an Answer by *fire*, which falling upon the *Altar* which he had built, consumed the Sacrifice laid thereon. Which the people beholding, fell upon their faces, acknowledging him to be the onely true God. *And they said, the Lord he is the God, the Lord he is the God.* v. 39. And such success let all Gods faithful servants look for. Plying the throne of grace, making their Addresses to their God, let them be assured they shall have audience, and in due time receive a gracious Answer. In *due time* (I say;) Though not in their own time, when they would have it, yet in *Gods time*, when he shall see it fitting and expedient for them. And therefore if this Answer be for a time differred, let this be no discouragement unto them. *Quod differtur non aufertur.* Let not this *delay* be taken for a *Denial*. *Yet a little while*

(saith

(saith the Apostle) *and he that shall come, will come, and will not tarry.* Heb. 10. 37. *Vapours* being exhaled and sent up from the earth, and drawn up by the Sun, they hang in the clouds for a time, but at the length they fall down again in refreshing dews and showres. And even so it is with *Prayers.* Prayers being sent forth from a humble heart, and drawn forth by the *Spirit of grace and supplication*, as they ascend up to heaven; *Thy prayers are come up for a memorial before God* (saith the Angel to *Cornelius*) Act. 10. 4. so, though they may wait there for a time, yet in due season they shall have their returns, falling down in sweet refreshing showres, or dews of mercy.

Use 2. Gods children encouraged to come to the throne of Grace.

Which (in the 2d place) let it invite and encourage all true believers to come unto the throne of grace upon all occasions, there to poure forth their souls before God. *O thou that hearest prayer, unto thee shall all flesh come.* Psal. 65. 2. Come, and come with boldness. *Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in the time of need.* Heb. 10. 16.

To incourage whereunto call we to mind the *experiences* which the Saints of God have had. Coming to the throne of grace, they have still found audience and acceptance, their prayers have been heard and answered. This *David* frequently tells us of, as touching himself. *I cryed unto the Lord with my voice, and he heard me out of his holy hill:* Psal. 3. v. 4. *The Lord hath heard my supplication, the Lord will receive my prayer.*

prayer. Psal. 6. 9. *I sought the Lord, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears,* Psal. 34. 4. And so often elsewhere. And the like doth our Apostle here in the Text; calling upon his God he was heard, and answered; *And he said unto me.* Now let these Experiences which others have had be incouragements unto us. Upon all occasions betake our selves to our prayers; come to the throne of grace.

Use 3. Coming thither, they are to wait for an Answer, praying without ceasing or fainting.

And coming thither *abide* there, not letting go our hope, but being constant in this exercise, praying and not fainting. This is the Lesson which our Saviour teacheth his Disciples by the Parable of the *importunate widow*; Luke 18. 1. *And he spake a Parable unto them to this end that men ought alwayes to pray, and not to faint.*] To pray *alwayes*, Ἐν παντὶ καιρῷ, in every opportunity; upon all occasions, as need and season require. Thus are Christians to *Continue in prayer* (as *Paul* calls upon his *Colossians* to do) Col. 4. 2. προσκαρτερεῖτε; *Continue instant* in it (as the same word is rendred, *Rom.* 12. 12:) *Praying without ceasing*, Ἀδιαλείπτως, (as we have it) 1 Thes. 5. 17. And as without *ceasing*, so without *fainting*. *Alwayes to pray and not to faint.* Μὴ ἐκκακεῖν. Not to be disheartned by whatever delays they meet with, by Gods deferring to answer their prayers, but still to hold on. Thus praying we shall receive an *Answer*, a gracious Answer in due season. Such was the success which that *importunate widow* is there said to find in her suit to the *unjust Judge*. Who, though (as it is said) *he neither feared God, nor regarded*

So praying, they shall in due time receive a gracious Answer.

regarded man, minded nothing but his own interest, and so for a time stopped his eares against her cry, not affording her any relief, yet at the length, being overcome by her importunity, he granteth her request. And shall an *unrighteous Judge* do this? how much more then (as our *Saviour* there argues *a minori*, from the lesse to the greater) will the *righteous God* be induced to hearken to the prayers of his Children, whom he so dearly loves, so as to succour and relieve them in their necessities. They being importunate with him, he will hearken to them. *Great is the prevalency of importunity.* It is so with *men*, who are oftimes overcome by it. So was *Elisha* by the importunity of the young *Prophets*, (as we have the Story) 2 Kings 2. 16, 17. They coming unto him, humbly besought him that he would give way that some might be sent to make a diligent search for his Master *Elijah*, who being then taken up into heaven, they apprehended that possibly the Spirit of the Lord, which had taken him out of their sight, might have cast him upon some Mountain, or into some Valley, and so he might be in a solitary condition. But this their suit he (knowing that their labour would be but in vain, and to no purpose) would not hearken to. *And he said, ye shall not send*: v. 16. yet being importuned by them, he yields to them. *When they urged him till he was ashamed* (as the next verse hath it) (ashamed that he should seem inexorable) *he said, Send.* Thus are *men* oft-times overcome by the importunity of their unwearied suitors and supplicants, being brought

Men overcome by importunity.

brought to grant that which at the first they were unwilling with. And even thus doth the great *God* yeeld himself to be (as it were) overcome by the incessant importunities of those that make their humble addresses unto him, so as he seemeth to repent of what he had resolved upon. Thus was he overcome by his servant *Jacob*, who *wrestling with God* (as the Story tells us, *Gen.* 32 24.) and holding it out all the night long, until the breaking of the day, however (that he might be sensible of his own infirmity and weakness, as also of the power of him that strove with him) he received a touch in his thigh, whereby he became lame, *the hollow of his thigh was out of joynt*, yet persevering, and not letting him go, though desired so to do, *And he said let me go, for the day breaketh; And he said, I will not let thee go, except thou blesse me*, v. 26. At the length he prevailed with him; Whereupon his name was changed from *Jacob* to *Israel*, (as we find it v. 28.) *And he said thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel, for as a Prince hast thou power with God, &c.* Now in what way was it that he thus wrestled with his God, so as thus to prevail with him? why it was not barely in a *corporal*, but in a *spiritual* way, by his *Prayers* and *Teares*. So the Prophet *Hosea* expounds it, *Hos.* 12. 3, 4. where speaking of *Jacob*, he saith, *By his strength he had power with God, yea he had power over the Angel* (that is, the *Angel of the Covenant*, as *Christ* is called, *Malac.* 3. 1.) *and prevailed, he wept and made supplication unto him.* By this means it was that after

God yeelding himself to be overcome hereby.

So he was by *Jacob.*

after long striving and wrestling, he prevailed with his God.

And the like did *Moses*, as we find it *Exod.* 32. The Lord being incensed against his people *Israel* for their *Idolatry*, in making and worshipping their golden calfe, he acquaints his servant *Moses* with what his purpose was, *viz.* to poure out his wrath upon them to their utter destruction, *Now therefore* (saith he) *let me alone, that my anger may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them*, v. 10. Hereupon *Moses* betaketh himself to his prayers, earnestly interceding on their behalf, (as the verse following hath it) *And Moses besought the Lord his God, &c.* And what was the issue? we may see it v. 14. *And the Lord repented of the evil which he thought to do unto his people.* So prevalent was *Moses*'s prayer for the diverting of that judgement which the Lord had threatned against them, and which, had not *he stood in the breach, to turn away his wrath*, (as the *Psalmist* hath it, *Psal.* 106. 23.) had broke forth upon them. Such success did these servants of God find in their prayers, both for themselves, and others. And the like have many others found; by their importunity prevailing with their God. That we may find the like, imitate their examples, being importunate in our prayers, not doubting of speeding in our requests. *What will not importunity do with a friend?* This our *Saviour* setteth forth unto his *Disciples*, making use of it as an Argument to excite them to be instant, and earnest in prayer, Luke 11. 5, &c. *And he said unto*

By *Moses*.

Importunity prevalent with a friend.

unto them, which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, Lend me three loaves, for a friend of mine in his journey is come unto me, and I have nothing to set before him; And he from within shall answer and say, trouble me not, the doore is now shut, and my children are with me in bed, I cannot rise and give thee. I say unto you, though he will not rise and give him because he is a friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth. Though in regard of the unseasonableness of the time it would be a disquietment to him and his, and thereupon he be not so ready to grant his request, yet upon his importunity he cannot but yeeld to it. And will importunity prevail so much with *men*, who like it not? what will it do, or rather what will it not do, with *God*, who approveth of it, and is so well pleased with it, that he requireth it from those who are suitors unto him, putting the issue of their speeding upon it? Upon this account then come we to our God, praying unto him after this manner, with a holy and humble importunity. So doing, now doubt not of a gracious Answer, of receiving what we pray for. For which we have our Saviours assurance there in the verses following, v. 9, 10. *And I say unto you, Ask and it shall be given you, seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you; for every one that asketh receiveth, and he that seeketh findeth, and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.* Provided, that what is asked, be according to the will of God, and that his time be tarried

tarried and waited for (of which I ſhall ſpeak more anon.)

Which (to draw towards a concluſion of this point) let it both put us upon *praying*, and being *inſtant* in it, in ſeeking of God both for *our ſelves* and *others*. Chriſtians to be inſtant in Prayer.

For *our ſelves*, for the obtaining of ſome mercy which we want, for the removal of ſome evil which we feel, or the diverting of ſome judgement which we fear; In theſe caſes, if God do not anſwer our prayers at the firſt, yet hold on, pray again and again; pray (as our Apoſtle here did) *Thrice*, frequently and earneſtly. For themſelves.

And what we do for our ſelves, do we the like for *others*, ſuch as ſtand charged upon our prayers, or deſires a ſhare in them. Eſpecially for the *Publick*, for the *Church* of God (as elſewhere, ſo) in this *Nation*: The condition whereof is ſuch, that it calleth aloud for our prayers. And theſe I hope many of us have afforded. I, but as yet we have not received ſuch an Anſwer as we have deſired and expected. Still our diviſions and diſtractions are continued (if not increaſed) our *Breaches* are not healed, but rather grow wider and wider. Now in this caſe what ſhall we do? what lay our hands upon our mouths, and keep ſilence? Not ſo. *Ye that make mention of the Lord* (or *are the Lords remembrancers*, as our margin readeth it) *keep not ſilence, and give him no reſt, till he eſtabliſh, and till he make Jeruſalem a praiſe in the earth*; (ſo the Prophet calleth upon Gods ſervants, his Miniſters and others, to do) *Iſa.* 62. 7. willing them For others who ſtand charged upon their prayers. Specially for the Church.

to

to be instant and earnest with their God in the behalf of his Church, to be incessant in their prayers for it, for the restitution and settlement of it. And this let all that have a good will to *Sion* do; being (as we ought to be) deeply affected with the calamities of the Church, be we importunate with our God in the behalf thereof, that he would please to settle and to establish it. Thus be we instant and constant in our prayers, not doubting but that in due season we shall receive a gracious answer.

Direct. 1. Take heed of obstructing the return of prayer by giving allowance to any known sin.

Onely (to give you a word of *Direction* briefly) that our *Prayers* may be thus heard and answered, take heed of *obstructing* them, of stopping, or hindering the course of them. Which is done by allowing our selves in any known sin. *Now we know that God heareth not sinners* (saith the *Blind-man* being restored to his sight,) *Joh.* 9. 31. *Sinners!* Ἁμαρτωλῶν, *Peccatosos*, habitual, obstinate sinners, such as live and lie in any known sin against light, against conscience. Such as stop their ears against God, will not hear him speaking unto them, they cannot expect that he should hear them speaking unto him. Their prayers are to him an *Abomination*. So much the *Wiseman* tells them, Pro. 28. 9. *He that turneth away his ears from hearing the Law, even his Prayer shall be an abomination*. Upon this account it was that the Lord rejected the sacrifices of the Jews (as the Prophet *Isaiah* sets it forth, Isa. 1. *To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me, saith the Lord*; v. 11. *When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this*

this at your hands, to tread in my Courts, v. 12. *Bring no more vain oblations, Incenſe is an abomination unto me*; &c. And as their Sacrifices and Ceremonial ſervices were thus ſlighted by him, ſo alſo their *Prayers*, as he tells them v. 15. *When ye ſpread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you, yea when ye make many prayers I will not hear.* Were they never ſo inſtant and importunate, yet they ſhould find no audience. And what was it that thus obſtructed their Prayers? Why would not God hear them? The Reaſon followeth, *Your hands are full of blood.* They were given to oppreſſion and exortion, being cruel to their brethren, which in Gods repute is no better then *Murder.* So then, would we ſpeed in our prayers, and find acceptance with God, prevailing with him, hearken we to that advice and counſel, which he there giveth unto them in the verſes following. *Waſh ye, make ye clean, put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes, Ceaſe to do evil, learn to do well; Come now, let us reaſon together, ſaith the Lord*, v. 16, 17, 18. They who would offer up unto God ſuch a Sacrifice of *Prayer* as may be acceptable unto him, they muſt lift up *pure hands. I will therefore* (ſaith the Apoſtle) *that men pray every where lifting up holy hands*, 1 Tim. 2. 8. Ὁσίους χεῖρας. Such a Cuſtome there was among the *Jewes*, before they went to their devotions, they were wont to waſh their hands; as a token of their Innocency. So much is collected from that Text of the Pſalmiſt, *Pſal.* 26. 6. *I will waſh mine hands in innocency, ſo*

will I compass thine altar. What they did in a *Ceremonial*, do we it in a *spiritual* way. Wash we our hands in innocency, see that our lives be blameless, our actions approveable to God and men. And as our *Hands*, so our *Hearts*. *If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me*, Psal. 66. 18. See that we be *true Worshippers of God*, fearing and serving him. Being such, now may we comfortably look for audience in our Prayers. *If any man be a worshipper of God, and doth his will, him he heareth*, Joh. 9. 31.

Direct. 2. Aske according to Gods will.

And whilst we do his will, see that we *ask according to his will*. *And this is that confidence that we have in him, that if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us*, 1 Joh. 5. 14. Κατὰ τὸ θέλημα αὐτοῦ. *According to his will*, both in respect of the *Matter* asked, and the *Manner* of asking it, both which are conceived to be comprehended under that limitation.

1. For the Matter asked.

1. For the *Matter* asked, the thing petitioned for, see that that be *according to the will of God*; either agreeable to his *revealed will*, that which is good and acceptable in his sight, as the sanctifying gifts and graces of his Spirit are, which therefore he will not deny to those that ask them. *If ye then being evil, know how to give good things unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the holy Spirit to them that ask him?* Luke 11. 13. Or not contrary to his *secret will*; which in all our Petitions is to be submitted to (as I shall show you anon.)

2. And

2. And (2dly) for the *Manner* of asking, also that that be *according to the will of God;* that in making our Addresses, and presenting our Petitions unto God, we comport and behave our selves according to his *Will*, as he hath ordered and directed us in his Word. 2. For the Manner of asking.

1. *Coming unto him in the name of Jesus Christ.* Not in our own *names*, in confidence of any merit or worthiness in our selves, but of his merit, and Intercession. *Verily, verily, I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he will give it you* (saith our *Saviour* to his *Disciples*) Joh. 16. 23. Come in the name of Christ.

2. And asking in his name, *ask in faith. If any of you lack wisdome, let him ask of God* (saith St. *James*,) *but let him ask in faith, not wavering*; Jam. 5. 6. Αἰτείτω ἐν πίστει: *In faith*, resting upon Gods power, whereby he is *able*; upon his *grace* and *mercy*, whereby he is *willing*; upon his *faithfulness* and *truth*, whereby he will not fail to perform what he hath promised. *Not wavering*, μηδὲν διακρινόμενος, not calling into question any of these Attributes of his, or yet doubting of obtaining what we ask, if good for us. *I will that men pray every where lifting up holy hands, without wrath or doubting* (saith our Apostle in the Text fore-cited) 1 Tim. 2. 8. Κοσὶς ὀργῆς καὶ διαλογισμῶ, being *holy* in their lives and conversations before God, and in *Charity* with their Neighbors, let them not doubt of Gods performing his Promises. Thus come we to the throne of grace, though with *humility*, looking upon our selves as not worthy the Ask in faith.

least of mercies, yet with holy *confidence and boldness. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need*, Heb. 4. 16.

3. And thus praying in faith, pray also with *fervency. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much:* Jam. 5. 16. Δέησις ἐνεργουμένη, not a languid, faint, formal, but an earnest and affectionate prayer. It was the *fire* upon the *Altar* that made the smoke of the *Incense* to ascend upwards. And unless there be a holy fervour in the heart, our prayers will never ascend to heaven. Thus see that our *Prayers* be *according to the will of God*, both for their *Matter* and *Manner*.

3. For the End in asking, which should be chiefly Gods glory.

3. And so also for their *End*; see that that also be right; not the satisfying of our own lusts; *Ye ask and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts* (saith St. *James*) Jam. 4. 3. But the *glory of God*. This is that which a Christian should have a chief eye at, as in all his *actions*, in what ever he undertaketh, *whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God*, 1 Cor. 10. 31. So in his *prayers*, in what ever he asketh from God. Therein he is to seek not so much *himself*, as *God*; begging such and such mercies from God, that he may be the more serviceable unto him. Thus aske what we aske *according to the will of God*.

Direct. 3. Wait for an Answer.

And thus asking (to give you a Direction, or two, more) now *Waite: I have waited for thy sal-*

ſalvation, O Lord (ſaith the Patriarch *Jacob*) Gen. 49. 18. Lifting up our *hands* to him in prayer lift we up our *eyes* alſo. *Unto thee lift I mine eyes; O thou that dwelleſt in the heavens!* (ſaith *David*, Pſal. 123. 1. Waiting upon him to ſee what return he will make to our prayers. *Behold, as the eyes of ſervants look unto the hands of their Maſters, and as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her Miſtreſs, ſo our eyes wait upon the Lord our God, until that he have mercy upon us* (ſo the Pſalmiſt there goeth on) v. 2. Thus do poor *ſuppliants*, having preſented their *Petition* to their *Prince*, they now wait for an *Anſwer*. And the like do we to our *God*; Having put up our prayers to him, now wait for his *Anſwer*. And wait with *Patience*. *I waited patiently for the Lord* (ſaith *David*) *and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry*, Pſal. 40. 1. Thus doth the *Husbandman* (as St. *James* tells us, Jam. 5. 7.) *Behold the Husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it.* Having caſt his ſeed into the earth, now he waiteth for the coming of it forth, that in due ſeaſon he may receive the Crop. The like do we, having ſown the ſeed of our prayers, now wait upon God for the Return of them. *Be patient therefore Brethren to the coming of our Lord*, (ſo that Apoſtle there applyeth it.) μακροθυμήσατε, *Be long patient* (as the margin readeth it.) Though our God deferreth to Anſwer us; we have prayed again and again, but hear not of him, yet wait, tarrying his time, which is the beſt time.

Direct. 4. Hearken what God will say.

And thus waiting upon him, now let us *hearken to him.* Whilst we lift up our *hands and eyes*, lend we our *ears* also to hear what he will say to us. *I will hear what God the Lord will speak* (saith *David*) Psal. 85. 8. Having in the verses foregoing put up his earnest prayer to his God in the behalf of himself, and his people, that God would withdraw his Judgements from them, reviving and restoring them; *Wilt thou not revive us again, that thy people may rejoyce in thee?* v. 6. *Shew us thy mercy O Lord, and grant us thy salvation*, v. 7; then he resolves upon what he would do, quietly to wait upon his God for an Answer, hearkning and hearing what he would say, what return he would make. And the like do we; having put up our prayers unto God for our selves or others, now lend our ear to him, hearing what he will speak, carefully observing what return he shall please to make to us. So doth our Apostle here in the Text. Having plyed the throne of grace with his prayers, *besought the Lord thrice* (as he saith) frequently and earnestly, now he heareth what the Lord said unto him, what return he made to him. Which what it was, the words following will informe us, to which I now come. *And he said unto me,*

My grace is sufficient for thee.

The Answer looked upon in a Particular way, as this Answer.

But what is this to *Pauls request?* That which he desireth is, that the *thorne in his flesh* might be taken from him, that *the Messenger of Satan* might *depart* from him, that he might be freed from

from that vexatious trouble, ſo as to feel no more of it. But this he heareth nothing of, onely of a *ſufficiency of Grace.*

Such returns God is pleaſed often to make to the prayers of his people, anſwering them not *directly*, by complying with their deſires, granting the particular thing which they pray for, but ſomewhat inſtead of it, ſomewhat that may be *equivalent* to it, as good, if not better for them. Such was the Anſwer that was returned to our bleſſed *Saviours* prayer which he made in the Garden. Being then in his *Agony*, he *prayes* and prayes (as *Paul* here did) *thrice*. And thus praying, he was *heard*. *He was heard in that which he feared* (as the Apoſtle telleth us) *Heb.* 5. 7. Now what was that which he feared? Why, that *bitter Cup*, which he ſaw coming towards him, his bitter death and Paſſion, which was then at hand. This was the thing which he feared, and fearing deprecated, praying againſt it, earneſtly deſiring that he might be freed and delivered from it. *He fell on his face, and prayed, ſaying, O my Father, if it be poſſible, let this Cup paſs from me*, Matth. 26. 39. And in this prayer he was heard. But how was he heard? What, by granting the thing he prayed for? Not ſo; that bitter *Cup* was put to his mouth, and he drank it, yea drank it off, ſuffering whatever Gods juſtice required, and had predetermined. But he was heard and anſwered by way of equivalence; having an *Angel* ſent unto him to comfort, and *ſtrengthen* him (as St. *Luke* tells us) Luke 22. 43. and being mightily by a di-

Obſerv. Prayer not always anſwered directly, but by way of equivalency.

vine power supported in his sufferings, so as wrestling with *Hell* and *Death* he came off a Conquerour, *Abolishing death*, 2 Tim. 1. 10. *Through death destroying him that had the power of death, the Devil*, Heb. 2. 14. *So triumphing over them in his Cross*, Col. 2. 15. Thus was he *heard* in that which he *feared*; Not by granting that which, with submission to his Fathers will, he desired, but by doing that for him which was more for his, and the worlds advantage. And even after the like manner was this our Apostle heard in that which he *felt*. Not by granting to him the thing which he prayed for, but by promising to him what was equivalent, as good, yea better for him, a sufficiency of grace for the supporting of him in that conflict, and giving him a comfortable issue of it. And thus (as I said) God is pleased often to answer the prayers of his people; *Non quoad votum sed quoad commodum, non quoad voluntatem, sed quoad utilitatem, non quoad desiderium sed quoad salutem*, (as *Aquinas* and *Carthusian*, and some others writing upon the Text observe) not according to their wishes, their wills, their desires, but according to what may be most safe, most expedient, most advantageous unto them in order to their salvation; not granting the thing which they pray for, but somewhat instead of it.

Reas. A Threefold Reason of it.

And will you know *why* he doth so, see a threefold ground or Reason for it; *their Weakness, his Wisdome and Goodness.*

1. Mans ignorance in asking.

1. *Their Weakness* in asking, which it may be is such as that they know not what to aske. So our

our *Saviour* tells *Mother Zebedee*, with her *two Sons*, when she presented that requeſt unto him in their behalves, that they might *ſit the one on his right hand, and the other on his left in his Kingdome*, be preferred to the higheſt places of honour in that his temporal Kingdome, which they then dreamed of, *He anſwered and ſaid, ye know not what you ask*, Matth. 20. 22. They thought that thoſe who were his chief favourites ſhould have much ſecular honour and eaſe, with all affluence of worldly accommodations. But herein they were much miſtaken, as he there tells them; were that their Petition granted they would find the quite contrary, being expoſed to more and greater troubles and ſufferings then others, more then they knew how to bear: *Are ye able to drink of the Cup that I ſhall drink of, &c.* And truly ſo it is oft-times in the Petitions and requeſts which Gods people put up unto him; whileſt they ask ſuch and ſuch temporal bleſſings, they ask they know not what; they deſire that, which if it were granted to them, they would have cauſe to repent of their prayers, that which would prove hurtful, if not baneful to them. Such were the *Iſraelites Quailes* to them, which they asking were given them, and that in great abundance, but what went in at their mouths *came out at their noſtrils* (as *Moſes* foretold them it ſhould do, *Numb.* 11. 20.) they being therewith ſurfeited, ſo as they in a violent way came to vomit up what at the firſt was ſo pleaſing to their palates. And ſo would it fare oft-times with Gods people, ſhould he ſatisfie

tisfie their desires, in granting what they pray for, it might prove very prejudicial to them, if not in a temporal, yet in a spiritual way, very detrimental as to their souls. Many a soul there is now in hell, which (if we speak according to secondary causes) had never come there, had not God granted the desires of it in bestowing upon it such an abundance of outward things, as Riches and Honours, &c. which oft-times prove baneful to the possessors of them, as the *Preacher* tells us from his own observation, Eccl. 5. 13. *There is a sore evil which I have seen under the Sun*, viz. *Riches kept for the owners thereof to their hurt*; their temporal or spiritual hurt, whereof they were the occasions. And many a soul is now in heaven, which had not God crossed the inordinate desires of it, by withholding from it what it would have had, it had never come there. Such is the weakness even of Gods own people in praying, that oftentimes they ask that, which if granted to them, they should (as I said) have cause to repent of.

2. Gods Wisdome.

2. But (in the 2d. place) such is the *Wisdom of God*, that he knoweth what is good for them. As he *knoweth what things they have need of, before they ask him.* Matth. 6. 8. so he knows what will be expedient for them. So our *Saviour* tells his Disciples concerning his own departure from them, Joh. 16. 7. *Nevertheless I tell you the truth, it is expedient for you that I go away, for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you*, &c. Thus God foresees what good or evil would redound unto his people, from what he shall

shall grant unto them, or with-hold from them.

3. And being thus *wise*; he is also *good and gracious* to his people, consulting for their good, their Benefit; and thereupon it is that he doth not alwayes grant their requests, but sometimes answer them in some other way. *Bonus Dominus, qui sæpe non tribuit quod volumus, ut tribuat quod mallemus* (saith *Jerom* to his *Paulinus.*) Good and gracious is the Lord, who oft-times with-holdeth that from his people which they would have, that so he may bestow upon them that which will be more welcome to them. A loving father will not give his child a knife, though it cry for it. Nor will God grant unto his children that which may be hurtful to them, though they earnestly desire it from him. But will do that, in way of Answer to their prayers, which he seeth to be most expedient for them. And hence it is that he seemeth sometimes to lend a deaf ear to their prayers; suffering them to lie and continue under some sharp affliction, not working deliverance for them, though earnestly importuned by them. Even as a *Chyrurgeon* deals with his *Patient* (it is *Augustines* similitude, and it is an apt one) having applyed to him some sharp corrasive, which drawing and burning, puts him to great pain, he earnestly desires him to take it off, but his *Chyrurgeon*, being Master of his Art, and so knowing what is fit and proper for his trouble, lets it alone, wishing him to be Patient, and let it lie still, untill it have done the work for which it was intended, promising to do that which shall be

3. His Graciousness.

Hieron. Epist. ad Paulinum.

August. in Psal. 130.

be beſt for him. Even ſo dealt the Lord here with his ſervant *Paul*. *Paul* being in danger of a ſpiritual *Tympanie* (as I ſhewed you before) of being inordinately lifted up through abundance of Revelations, for the preventing hereof the Lord exerciſeth him with ſome ſharp affliction. Hereupon he earneſtly ſolicites him for a removal of it. But this requeſt of his is not granted, the Lord not ſeeing it expedient for him. Onely in the mean time he giveth him a comfortable aſſurance of that which ſhould be as good, nay better for him. *My grace is ſufficient for thee.*

Applicat. Chriſtians not to ſtint God in their Prayers.

A uſeful *Obſervation*. So let it be unto us, teaching us not to *ſtint God in our prayers*, by being ſo abſolute in our requeſts, as that nothing ſhall content us, unleſs we have the thing which we deſire. Such was *Abraham's* and *Rachel's* deſire after Children. *Lord God, what wilt thou give me; ſeeing I go childleſs?* (ſaith he) Gen. 15. 2. *Give me children, or elſe I dye* (ſaith ſhe to her husband *Jacob*) Gen. 30. 1. Such is the impatience of ſome, and too many, their hearts running out after ſuch, or ſuch a bleſſing, nothing will content them but that. Let it not be ſo with us. Knowing that we have to deal with a wiſe and a good God, who knoweth better what is fit for us, then we for our ſelves, let us ſubmit our wills to his will. So did our heavenly Pattern, the *Lord Jeſus*, though he prayed *thrice* for the taking away of the bitter Cup, yet ſtill it was with ſubmiſſion of his will to the will of his heavenly Father. *If it be poſsible, let this Cup paſs from me, Neverthelesſ not as I will, but*

but as thou wilt, Matth. 26. 39. And again, *O my father, if this Cup may not pass from me except I drink it, thy will be done*, v. 42. *And so he prayed the third time, using the same words*, v. 44. Herein let every of us propound him as a Pattern for our imitation, following his example; In presenting our requests unto God, resigne up them, and our selves unto him, leaving our Petitions with him, to make what answer he shall think fit to return. Which receiving, now let us rest contented with it, and thankful for it. Looking upon it as no small grace and favour that we may have access to the throne of grace, and that our prayers may find audience and acceptance with God. And looking upon our selves as *not worthy of all the mercies which he hath shewed unto us* (as *Jacob* humbly confesseth concerning himself, Gen. 32. 10.) now, though we fall short in our desires, wanting what we would have, yet bless God for what he is pleased to reach forth unto us. Resting (as I said) *contented* with it, and *thankfull* for it. Remembring that it is not for *Beggars* to be *choosers*. No nor yet for *Children*, who do not know what is good for themselves so well as their *Parents* do. But I shall not any longer insist upon this; but pass on to that which my eye is chiefly upon; the *Matter* and *Substance* of this Answer, what is it that God here saith unto his servant *Paul*.

The Matter and Substance of the Answer.

My grace is sufficient for thee.] *My grace*; ἡ χάρις μου. And what shall we understand hereby? Not to trouble you with the various senses

Grace here taken two wayes.

of

of this Word [*Grace*] in Scripture; which are very many, scarce any one word (that I know) admitting of more. In this place I find it looked upon two wayes.

Sense 1. For the Love and favour of God.

1. Some hereby understand the *Love and favour of God*. And thus we find this word, χάρις, *Grace*, frequently used. Being sometimes applyed unto *men*, whose loving and well liking is called by this name. Thus it is said of *Joseph*, that he *found grace in the sight of his Master Potiphar*, Gen. 39. 4. And so of *Hester*, that *King Ahasuerus loved her above all the women, and she obtained grace and favour in his sight more then all the virgins*, Hest. 2. 17. And so we read of the Apostles, that they *had favour with all the people*, Acts 2. *ult.* Where the word is the same with that in the Text, χάριν, *grace*, they were well liked, and approved of by them. And thus being referred unto *God*, it often imports the same thing, his *love* and *favour*. Thus it is said of *Noah*, that *he found grace in the eyes of the Lord*, Gen. 6. 8. And so of *Mary* the Mother of our Lord, whom the *Angel* salutes after that manner, Luke 1. 28. *Haile thou that art highly favoured*; (or *freely beloved* (as the former Translation hath it) κεχαριτωμένη, *gratificata, full of favour and grace*, as the vulgar Latin readeth it, *Ave gratiâ plena*. So he explaines his meaning, v. 30. *Thou hast found favour with God*. And so it is said of Christ himself, *Cap.* 2. *v. ult. he increased in favour with God and man*. In both which places that word is still the same with that in the Text. And in such a sense do divers Expositors of note here look

Grotius.
Diodate.
Estius.

upon

upon it. *My grace*, that is, My *Love and favour.*

Now so taking it, how doth the Lord here say to *Paul*, that this his grace was *sufficient for him*? Ἀρκεῖ σοι; *sufficient*, or *sufficere debet*, (as *Grotius* explaines it) it is enough for thee; that which may well suffice thee, so as thou both mayest, and oughtest to rest contented with it. In such a sense *Philip* useth the word, Joh. 14. 8. *Lord*, (saith he to his Master Christ) *Shew us the Father and it sufficeth us.* Ἀρκεῖ ἡμῖν; we shall rest satisfied and contented with it, so as not to be further troublesome unto thee in propounding any more questions. And so it is here looked upon by some. *My grace is sufficient for thee.* It is enough to suffice thee. Yea *more then enough.* So this word is fitly expounded by some in that Text, 1 Pet. 4. 3. *The time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles.* Ἀρκετὸς ἡμῖν. It is enough, and more then enough. And so it may be here looked upon, as having a *Meiosis* in it, intending more then what is expressed. *My grace is sufficient for thee*; enough, and more then enough, that which may serve abundantly to satisfie and content thee in this condition, though thy prayer be not answered according to thy desire.

How this grace may be said to be sufficient.

And so it is in all estates and conditions; In the midst of what ever wants or sufferings, Gods *grace*, his love and favour is, and ought to be, sufficient to those that are interested in it, so as they are to rest themselves satisfied and contented with it.

Observ. Christians in all estates to rest satisfied with Gods love and favour.

And

Reas. 1. He being a God Allsufficient.

And well may they so do, considering *whose* Grace this is; *My grace*, the grace of *God*, who is a *God Allsufficient* (as the *Geneva* renders that Text) Gen. 17. 1. A *fountain*, *the fountain of living waters* (as he calleth himself) Jer. 2. 13. & 17. 13. As for all other things, creature stays and comforts, be they what they will, they are but (as he there saith of the Idol Gods) *Cisterns, Broken cisterns that can hold no water.* Though they may afford some solace and cotentment for a time, yet they are soon drawn dry; being like leaking vessels, that will not hold the liquer that is put into them, not yielding what is promised by them, and expected from them; but oft-times, like *brooks in the summer*, failing when there is most need of them. But God is a *fountain*, *fons perennis*, *an everlasting fountain*, *from whom cometh every good and perfect gift* (as St. *James* tells us) Jam. 1. 17. And being so, they who have an interest in him, in his *grace* and favour, what is it that they may not expect from him? *With thee is the fountain of life; in thy light we shall see light* (saith the Psalmist) Psal. 36. 9. God being *fons vitarum* (as the Original there hath it) *the fountain of lives*, from whom life temporal, spiritual, and eternal, and all such good things as appertain to any of them, do spring and flow, they who have an interest in him, in his grace and favour, however for a time they may *walk in darkness* (which a *childe of light* may sometimes do (as the Prophet *Isaiah* intimates it, Isa. 50. 10.) yet *in his light they shall see light*; when he causeth his face

מקור חיים *Vena vitarum*, Montanus.

face to shine upon them, manifesting that his grace and favour to them, they shall enjoy comfort and contentment; not wanting any thing that he shall see fitting and expedient for them. *The Lord God is a Sun, and a Shield,* (*light and defence*) *the Lord will give grace and glory, and no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.* Psal. 84. 11. *No good thing,* if good in it self, and good for them, it shall not be withheld from them: being Gods *favourites,* he will shew himself kind and liberal unto them. It is that which the *Wise man* saith of a *King,* Prov. 16. 15. *In the light of the Kings countenance is life, and his favour is as a cloud of the latter rain.* And again Chap. 19. 12. *His favour is as the dew upon the grass*; refreshing and enriching those that are interessed in it. His *favourites* shall not want what he hath to bestow upon them, be it riches or honour, *&c.* No more shall *Gods favourites*: He being *able to do for them exceeding abundantly above all that they can ask or think*; (as the Apostle sets forth Gods *Allsufficiency,* Eph. 3. 20.) and not more able than *willing*: well may they sit down and rest themselves contented with this, that they have this *God* for their *God,* having a standing in his *Grace.*

Reason 2. A God Immutable in his Love.

To this I might add, that as God is allsufficient, so also he is *immutable, unchangeable*: *I am the Lord, I change not,* Mal. 3. 6. Unchangeable, in his *Essence,* so in his *Affection.* Such was *Christs* love to his *Disciples,* (as St. *John* tells us) John 13. 1. *Having loved his own which*

were in the world, he loved them unto the end; to the end of his life. And with such a *love* doth God love his Elect people in Christ; he loveth them *to the end*, the end of their lives; yea to Eternity. *I have loved thee with an everlasting love*, Jer. 31. 3. Herein doth this grace and favour of his differ from that of earthly Kings and Princes, which is like themselves, mutable and changeable. Those whom they love to day, they may hate to morrow, (as *Saul* did *David*, 1 *Sam.* 18. and *Ahasuerus* his *Haman*. Hest. 6.) Their *favourites* have but a slippery standing. But so have not *Gods favourites*; their standing in his grace is a sure standing. *I am perswaded, that neither death, nor life*, &c. *shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord*, Rom. 8. 38. 39. So then, they who are once interessed in this grace, well may they (as I said) sit down, and content themselvs with it.

Application. Christians excited to two things.

A truth, and a usefull one; and so let it be unto us, minding us of two things, 1. Of *seeking after an interest in this Grace*, and then of *contenting our selves with it*.

Use 1. To seek an interest in this Grace, and assurance of it.

Seek wee after this grace, that we may get an interest, a standing in it. This God expecteth and requireth that we should do, and in obedience to his Commands see that we do it. *When thou saidest, Seek ye my face, my heart said unto thee, Thy face, Lord, I will seek*, (saith *David*) Psal. 27. 8. So it is, God (as it were) holdeth forth his *face*, tendreth his grace and favour to those who will seek after it, and this he calleth upon them to do. Now to this call let all our hearts

hearts (with *David's*) make answer, and say, *Thy face, Lord, we will seek.* And seek we this *in the first place*, as that which is more to be valued than all other things in the world. So *David* looked upon it, and therefore beggeth this above all, Psal. 4. 6. *There be many that say, who will shew us any good; Lord lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us.* As for the multitude, the greatest part of men, their hearts were carried out after the things of this world, τὰ ἐπίγεια φρονοῦντες (as *Paul* saith of some among his *Philippians*, cap. 3. 19.) *minding earthly things*, riches and honour, &c. which are their *summum bonum*, their chief good. But *David* was of another mind, placing his felicity in *Gods grace* and favour, he prized that above all: yea even above his own *life*. *Thy loving kindness is better than life*, (saith he, being then in the wilderness) *Psal.* 63. 3. And so look we upon it, preferring this before all other things, seek we it (as I said) in the first place, that we may have an interest in it, and have some good assurance of it; that God would make known to us this our interest, evidencing his love, his peculiar love to us. This is that which the *Spouse* maketh her first request to her *wellbeloved*, the *Church* to *Christ*, Cant. 1. 2. *Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth, for thy love is better than wine*; desiring that he would give unto her more clear evidences of his grace & favor, which would be more pleasing and cheering to her, than wine is to the palate and heart. Such account did *Christ* make of her love to him, as he expresseth it

in the same language; Cap. 4. v. 10. *How fair is thy love, my Sister, my Spouse? how much better is thy love than Wine?* And of like account was his love to her. And so it is to all Gods children, such as have *tasted* of this grace (which all true believers in measure have, as St. *Peter* intimates it, 1 Pet. 2. 3. *If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious*) not onely *heard* of it, by the doctrine of the Gospel (which is called *the Grace of God*, Tit. 2. 11. because it holdeth forth the saving grace of God in Christ) but *tasted* of it, having had some experimental knowledge of it in themselves, they cannot but be much taken with it, and highly esteem of it. And this do we; giving no rest to our souls, untill we have got some evidence and assurance of this our interest, that we have a standing in *this grace*.

Not contenting themselves with Gods Common Grace and favour.

This grace; I say; mark that. Not contenting our selves with that *common grace* and favour, which God vouchsafeth even to the worst of men, on whom he bestoweth many *left-hand blessings*, many temporal favours, and that sometimes, oft-times, in a more plentiful measure, then upon his own dearest servants; upon the account whereof they may be said to *find grace in his sight*. But rest we not contented with this *common grace*, which is often exercised upon those who have no interest in his *love*. *No man knoweth either love or hatred, by all that is before him*, Eccles. 9. 1. But seek we after a *special grace*, a peculiar love and favour, such as that is wherewith he imbraceth his elect people, whom

whom he hath ordained and called to obtain salvation.

Quest. But how shall this interest be *obtained*? And how shall it be *assured*?

Two useful Questions. I shall give Answer to each briefly.

Quest. For the former; *How shall this interest be obtained?* *Question* 1. How this Interest may be obtained.

Ans. I answer in a word; *Get an interest in Christ*; which is done by *believing* on him. By this means, and onely this, it is that poor sinners come to have a *standing in this grace.* So much we may learn from that one Text of the Apostles (among many other) Rom 5. 1, 2. *Therefore being justified by faith we have peace toward God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, By whom we have access by faith unto this grace, wherein we stand.* By this means it is, that being by nature enemies, they come to be *reconciled* unto God, it is by and through Jesus Chirst. *All things are of God, who hath reconciled us unto himself by Jesus Christ*, 2 Cor. 5. 18. And by this means they come to be *ingratiated* with him, being *made accepted in the beloved*, Eph. 1. 6. that is, in Christ. God being well pleased with him, he is well pleased with all those whom he beholds in him. *This is my beloved Sonne, in whom I am well pleased* (saith the voice from heaven) Matth. 3. *ult.* Ἐν ᾧ, *In whom*;] God having set his love upon Christ, being *the Sonne of his love,* *Answer.* Get an Interest in Christ.

love, he loveth all those whom he beholdeth in him. Hence is it that (as some do expound it) the *grace of God* is sometimes called *the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ*: which we find the Apostles frequently apprecating, and wishing to the Churches, *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you*, Rom. 16. 20, 24. 1 Cor. 16. 23. Rev. 22. 21. Meaning thereby the grace and favour of God; which as it is purchased and procured for all Gods Elect by Jesus Christ, so it is conferred upon all those whom he beholdeth in him. So then, that we may have a share in this grace, see that we have an interest in Christ, being united to him, and made one with him by faith.

Question 2. How Assure. *Answer.* By receiving Grace for Grace.

But how may we be *assured* of our interest in this grace? *Ans.* Briefly, have we *received grace for grace*? This St. *John* tells us all true believers have. *Of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace*, Joh. 1. 16. χάριν ἀντὶ χάριτος, *Grace upon grace*, one grace following, and flowing from another, the grace of *Sanctification* flowing from the free grace and favour of God in Christ, (as some expound that Text.) Nor have we received this *Grace*; the *spirit of grace*, (as it is called *Heb.* 10. 29.) that *Spirit* which God of his free grace bestoweth upon his elect people, and worketh effectually in them, enduing them with all saving and sanctifying graces. Do we find the *Spirit* dwelling and working in us, inclining our hearts, as to *fear* God, (not with a *servile*, but a *filial* fear, to fear him as a *Father*) so to love him; now take this as an evidence

dence of this *grace*, and assurance of this *love*. *We love him* (saith St. *John*) *because he first loved us*, 1 Joh. 4. 9. So it is, our *love to God*, is but the *reflexion* of *his love to us*; being the product and effect of it. So as from the one, we may certainly conclude the other, as we do the *Cause* from the *Effect*. Only see that this our *love* be

Love to' God a reflexion of his Love, evidencing it.

1. *Sincere* and *unfeigned*. That we *love him* (as St. *John* saith he did the *Elect Lady*, 2 Ep. Joh. 1.) *in the truth*, in sincerity: *Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity*, Eph. 6. v. last. That we love him for himself, and for his love to us.

Being sincere

2. A *peculiar love*, that we love him above all, above all other things in the world. *Lovest thou me more than these?* (saith our Saviour to *Peter*) Joh. 21. 15. πλέιον τέτων, that is, (as some (how rightly I will not say) expound it) more then thou lovest these thy Brethren. Thus do they who truly love God, and Jesus Christ, they love them above all, *hating* all things in comparison of them; as our *Saviour* expresseth it, *Luk.* 14. 26. *If any man come to me, and hate not his father and mother, and wife and children*, &c. *yea and his own life, he cannot be my Disciple*. Which is (as I said) to be understood *comparatively*, so as not to prefer him before all. Now is there such a *love* to be found in us? Can we say that we love God above all? and withal prize his love above all earthly enjoyments? Now take this as an undoubted evidence of this his *grace*, his love to us.

Peculiar.

Use 2.

Christians in all estates, to rest contented with this Grace.

Which being thus interested in, and assured of, now let this *grace be sufficient for us*; in what ever state or condition we be, rest we our selves contented in this, that we have *God for our God*, *Nimis avarus est cui non sufficit Deus* (saith *Augustine*). Well may he be looked upon as a great deal too covetous, whom God himself cannot satisfie. What though we want these and these creature comforts which others enjoy, yet enjoying him, let him be to us instead of all. *Am not I better to thee than ten Sons* (saith *Elkanah* to *Hannah*, when she was bemoaning her barrenness) 1 *Sam.* 1. 8. And so may it well be said in the want of whatever blessings; What? is not God better to us then they, or whatever else we can desire? *Deus meus & omnia*, If God be ours, all is ours. *All things are yours*, (saith *Paul* to his believing *Corinthians*) *whether things present, or things to come, all are yours*, 1 Cor. 3. 21,22,23. Having an interest in *Christ*, and so in the grace and favour of God through him, now all things were theirs, serving for their good and benefit. And let this be enough for us. *It is enough*, Joseph *my Son is yet alive*, (saith the aged *Patriarch*) Gen. 45. last. It was enough to content him, he being to him his dear son: And so let it be said to us; having the *living God* for *our God*, our tender and affectionate Father in Christ, let this be enough to us; having an interest in his grace, his peculiar love and favour, now in the midst of whatever wants, or sufferings we are exercised with, let this suffice and content us, as well it may. So the Lord is appre-

apprehended by some here to speak unto his servant *Paul*; *Paul* being in a sad conflict, under some temptation or vexation, he earnestly desireth to be freed from it: but the Lord returns him no other answer but this, *My grace is sufficient for thee*; so willing him to rest satisfied and contented with this, yet he was a favourite of his, and consequently he would have an eye to him, to do that for him which would be most for his good. But I shall not any longer insist upon this sence of the word; the sweetness whereof hath drawn forth my meditations beyond my first intention.

2d. *Sense.* Grace taken for Gods gracious assistance.

Others there are, who by the *Grace of God* here, understand rather the Ἐνέργεια, the *putting forth* of this grace, the acting of it, the effectual operation of the Spirit of grace: And in such a sence this word [*Grace*] is frequently used in Scripture. As in that Text, *Act.* 14. 26. where it is said of *Paul* and *Barnabas*, that they were by the Church *recommended to the grace of God*; recommended in their Prayers to the gracious assistance of Gods holy Spirit, which might enable them to the work of their Ministry, and make their labours effectual. And so the Apostle himself useth it, 1 *Cor.* 15. 10. where in one verse we find this word [*Grace*] used in a threefold sence: 1. For the *good will* and *favour* of God [*By the grace of God I am that I am.*] That he was not only a *Christian*, but an *Apostle*, an *eminent Apostle*, this he ascribes to the free grace of God, his meer good will. 2. For a *gift of that grace*; [*And his grace which*

which was bestowed on me was not in vain] meaning his calling to his Apostleship, with his Ministerial gift, his ability for the discharge of it, which he improved to the utmost of his power, for the good and benefit of the Church, not without good success. Then (3.) for the *Powerfull assistance of Gods Spirit* [*But I laboured more abundantly then they all, yet not I, but the grace of God, which was with me*;] a divine assistance going along with me in Preaching of the Gospel, giving me both will and power to do what I have done. And in such a sense is this word not unfitly looked in that Text, *Rom.* 6. 14. where *Paul* saith of his believing *Romans*, that they were *not under the Law, but under Grace*: not under the rigorous exaction of the Law, which requireth what it giveth no strength to perform, but under the gracious dispensation of the *Gospel*, and under the *Covenant of grace*; having an internal power given them, the spirit of God working effectually in them, and so fulfilling that in them which was required from them. And so is it here looked upon by many, the greatest part of Expositours. *My grace is sufficient for thee*; that is, my *grace in thee*. Not that *Habit of grace*, which he had already received, (as *Gorrham* here understand it) which (saith he) was in so great abundance, as might well enable him to bear those, or whatever sufferings; But that *supply of grace*, which I will make, and reach forth unto thee; the *supply of my Spirit*. This was that which *Paul* himself looked at as that which must support, and carry

In this sense most properly here taken. *Sufficit tibi gratia mea*] *quam scil: in tanta abundantia dedi tibi, ut per eam possis, & visiones videre, & tribulationes tolerare.* Corran Com. in loc.

carry him through, as his *doing*, so his *suffering* work, turning all to his good. So he tells his *Philippians*, Cap. 1. 19. *I know* (saith he) *that this* (meaning the malice of his Adversaries, who sought to add affliction to his bonds) *shall turn to my salvation through your prayer, and through the supply of the spirit of Jesus Christ* Διὰ ἐπιχορηγίας τοῦ πνεύματος, the *ministration of the Spirit*, coming in unto him, and sanctifying his affliction to him. And such a *supply of grace* it is, that the Lord here speaketh of, a *supply of his Spirit*, which should support and strengthen him in that conflict, inabling him to endure and go through with it, so as to be a gainer by it, and come off a Conqueror in the end. So *Calvin* here looketh upon it. This word *Grace* (saith he) here signifieth, not the favour of God (as elsewhere it doth) but *Auxilium Spiritus Sancti*, the the aid and assistance of Gods holy Spirit. And so *Hemingius* and many others; with whom I shall choose to go along, though not wholly excluding the former Interpretation, being not inconsistent with this, yet looking upon this as properly and principally intended in this place. So much I conceive is intimated to us in the clause following, which is rendred as a *Reason* of the *Answer* here returned, *For my strength is made perfect in weakness.* My *power* or *vertue* being exerted and put forth for thy support and comfort. This it is which here he calleth *Grace*, and *My Grace.*

Vocabulum Gratia hic non favorem Dei (ut alibi) sed per Metonymiam auxilium Spiritus Sancti significat Calvin in loc.

Quest. And why so called? Take a Reason or two for each.

Question 1. Divine assistance why called Grace?

Grace

Answer. Because freely given.

Grace; 1. *Quia gratis data*, because *freely given* and bestowed, without respect to any merit or desert in the person on whom it is bestowed. Such is the operation of the spirit, which we find called a *free spirit*, Psal. 51. 12. *Establish me with thy free Spirit. Spiritu spontaneo*, or *voluntario*, a free spirit, (as upon other accounts, so) in as much as it worketh freely; being in the motions of it like the *wind*, as our Saviour maketh the comparison, Joh. 3. 8. *The wind bloweth where it listeth, &c. So is every one that is born of the Spirit.* The working of the Spirit is a free operation. And upon that account all the gifts of it may be called by the name of *grace*, because gifts of grace, freely bestowed. *Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.* 1 Cor. 2. 12.

2. And again, *Grace*; *quia nobis à gratuito Dei favore provenit*, because (as *Calvin* hath it) it is not onely freely bestowed, as all other gifts are; but it also proceedeth from that *special grace* and favour of God, which he beareth to his Elect. In this work of the Spirit is that special grace also exercised and put forth The one being as the *spring*, the other as the *stream*; the one the *Mother*, the other the *Daughter*; the one the *Seal*, the other the *Print*; the one an impression and clear manifestation of the other.

Question 3. Why God, grace?

Answer 1. How the God of all grace.

My grace; 1. in as much as God is the *Author* and giver of it. Thence called *the God of all grace*, 1 Pet. 5. 10. *The Lord will give grace and glory*, Psal. 84. 11.

2. As

2. As it cometh from him, so the *propriety* of it still resteth and remaineth in him. Grace is a *Talent*, which God putteth into the hands of his people, to improve for him. So as they are but like those who trade with another mans stock. *Lo there thou hast that is thine* (saith that *evil servant* in the Parable, when he returned to his *Master* the *Talent* wherewith he had betrusted him,) Matth. 25. 25. Grace in man Gods Talent.

Applic. And if so, why then should any be proud of the grace which they have? Though therein they exceed and excell others, yet why should their hearts be lifted up in them above measure? It being not so much their grace, as *Gods grace.* They are but the *users*, he the *Owner* of it; To whom also they must be accountable for what they have. *Use* 1. Christians not to be proud of their grace.

2. Which taking notice of, let it be our care and endeavour to improve the grace which we have; to make the best improvement of it we may. Remembring that we are rather *factors* then *Owners*, not *Lords* but *Stewards.* That is St. *Peters* phrase, 1 Pet. 4. 10. *Stewards of the manifold grace of God*; Οἰκονόμοι χάριτος Θεοῦ. And so looking upon our selves, see that we endeavour to be, such as he there calleth upon us to be; Καλοὶ οἰκονόμοι, *good stewards* of this grace, remembring whose grace it is, and to whom we must be accountable for it. But this by the way. *Use.* 2. But to improve it for God.

We see what is here meant by *grace*, and how the Lord calleth it, *Grace*, and *his grace.* And of this his grace he mindeth his servant *Paul* that it

was

was *sufficient* for him. Ἀρκεῖ σοι *My grace is sufficient for thee.*

Observ. Divine Grace is sufficient for such as shall make a right use of it.

And so is it to every one that shall make a right use of it; mark it. This is the *Observation* which I take up from hence, and which my eye is chiefly upon. *Gods grace is sufficient for all that will make a right use of it.* This is that which the Lord here tells this our Apostle. *Paul* was at this time (to make use of the Vulgar Phrase in a true sense) *in ill handling.* God had let *Satan* loose upon him to *buffet* him, to exercise him (as is most probable) with some sharp and violent Temptation, so as he apprehended himself for the present in a very ill state, a dangerous condition. Hereupon he maketh his Address unto God, frequently and earnestly soliciting and importuning him for a speedy deliverance. But the Lord returns him no other Answer but this, *My grace is sufficient for thee.* And so it may be said to all others, what ever their estate and condition be, yet this grace of God is *sufficient* for them.

Reason 1. Being the grace of God, who is the God of all grace.

And well may it be concluded so to be, considering (what hath been touched upon before) *whose* grace this is. *My grace.* The grace of God, (who is as we have heard) *El Shaddai; a God All sufficient*, Gen. 17. 1. All-sufficient in himself, Αὐτάρκης; and All-sufficient to his *Creatures*; Being (as our new Translation there renders the word,) *Almighty*, he is able to *do* for his people *exceeding abundantly above all that they ask or think* (as the Apostle sets forth his *All-sufficience*, Eph. 3. 20.) Needs must this grace be in it self *sufficient*, which is the grace of that God who is *All sufficient*. Such is the *fountain*. 2. And

2. And such is the *Conduit-pipe*, through which this grace is conveyed, which is *Jesus Christ*. In him there is a *fulness*, as of *Merit*, so of *Spirit*, a fulness of grace. *The word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, full of grace, and truth.* Joh. 1. 14. God the Father communicating his *Essence* to his Son, he therewith communicated all his *essential properties* and perfections to him, as power, wisdome, goodness, mercy, &c. and so was he full of grace; *the fulness of the God-head dwelling in him bodily*, that is, really and substantially, (as the Apostle hath it) Phil. 2. 9. And out of this fulness it is that all true believers receive this grace of God. *Of his fulness we have all received, and grace for grace*, Joh. 1. 16. that is (as some expound it) grace conveyed unto us from the fulness of grace in Christ. *To every one of us is given grace, according to the measure of the gift of Christ.* Eph. 4. 7. Now there being such a diffusive fulness of grace in him, well may this grace be looked upon as sufficient for all those who have an interest in him, and communion with him.

2. Conveyed through Christ, who is full of grace.

3. To these I might add (in the third place) the *efficacy of the Spirit*, which as it is the *Spirit of grace*, so of *Power*. Thence called by the name of *power*, Eph. 3. 20. *According to the power that worketh in us*; κατὰ τὴν δύναμιν, that is, the holy Spirit of God working powerfully and effectually in the hearts of his Elect people. Such is the Ἐνέργεια, the efficacious working of the Spirit of grace where it doth *vires exerere*, put forth its strength, it worketh *mightily*, as the Apostle

3. Wrought by the Spirit, which is the Spirit of Grace and Power.

Apostle saith it did in him, Col. 1. 29. *According to his working, which worketh in me mightily, ἐνεργουμένην ἐν δυνάμει, with power.* And consequently well may that grace, which is the working of this Spirit, be concluded to be *sufficient*. But I shall not spend time in evincing what, in *Thesi*, in the general, will at all hands be yielded. *A sufficiency in this Grace there is.*

Explication.

Quest. But for *whom* is this Grace sufficient? and for *what*? Let this twofold Enquiry be made, for the more full handling of this useful point. Of the former more briefly.

Question. I. For whom this grace is sufficient.

Quest. For *whom* is this Grace sufficient?

Answer. Generally for All.

Ans. I answer, *Generally* for *all* men. *The grace of God that bringeth salvation, hath appeared to all men* (saith the Apostle) Tit. 2. 11. ἡ χάρις ἡ σωτήριος, *Gratia salutaris*, or *salutifera*, the *saving grace* of God; his exceeding mercy and goodness tendring salvation to all, all sorts of persons, not onely *Jewes*, (as under the *Law*) but *Gentiles*, to all without distinction of Nation, sex, age, or condition. This grace now under the *Gospel* it is indifferently manifested unto all. And being thus manifested unto all, it is *sufficient* for all, *bringing salvation unto all men*, (as that Text by some is, and well may be rendered, σωτήριος πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις) that is, *Omnibus eam acceptantibus* (as *Grotius* explains it) to all that shall receive it, and make a right use of it. *There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.* Gal. 3. 28. So as that which the Lord here saith to his servant *Paul*, may be in a large sense spoken and ap-

plyed

plyed to every one, *My grace is ſufficient for thee.*

Which yet let it be warily and rightly underſtood. Not that this ſufficient grace is *given* to all, to every one. No, not to all thoſe to whom the Goſpel is preached (as *Arminius* and his followers would have it.) Herein I freely ſubſcribe to that Orthodox *Determination* of our two learned and judicous Profeſſors *Davenant* and *Prideaux*; *Non datur omnibus auxilium ſufficiens ad ſalutem.* All have not ſufficient grace given to them to bring them to ſalvation. For if ſo, then (as our *Perkins*, and others rightly conclude) it would be alſo *effectual* in them for the renewing and converting them. But where this grace of God, his *ſpecial grace*, is given and received, it is ſufficient, and that for *all.*

Sufficient grace not given to All.

Davenant Determinat. 49. *Prideaux Lect.* 3. *de Gratia univerſali.* *Perkins* Treatiſe of Predeſtination.

Queſt. But for *What* is it ſufficient? That is the ſecond Enquiry; to which I may return Anſwer again in a *general* way. As it is ſufficient *for all*, all *Perſons*, ſo it is ſufficient *to all*, to all *intents and purpoſes.* The *Spirit of grace* being like a *Wind* (to which it is compared in that Text fore-cited, Joh. 3. 8.) yea a *mighty wind*, (ſo it deſcended upon the Apoſtles at the day of *Penteco ſt*, *like a ruſhing mighty wind*, Acts 2. 2) it carrieth all before it, going on in its way, holding on its courſe, effecting whatever it undertaketh. It is *ſufficient* (as I ſay) *to all intents and purpoſes*, for what ever it undertaketh.

Queſtion 2. For what is it ſufficient?

Anſwer. In general for all intents and purpoſes.

But to ſet forth the ſufficiency of this grace more clearly and fully, I ſhall deſcend into ſome particulars. To make way whereunto I ſhall take

In particular.

Gods Grace twofold.
{ Working the first grace.
{ Co-working the following grace.

notice of that obvious Distinction of a twofold Grace, *Gratia Operans, & Co-operans, Working and Co-working* grace; or the *first* grace, and the *following* grace. The *first*, or *working* grace is the *converting grace* of God, whereby men are turned from all sin unto God, made *new Creatures*, being regenerated and born again, having not onely their understandings enlightned, but their wills and affections renewed and changed. The *following*, or *Co-working* grace is that whereby God continueth, confirmeth, and perfecteth that first grace, that work of grace which is begun in the soul, carrying it on until it come to full perfection in glory. Both these we finde put together in that one Text of the Apostle, *Phil.* 1. 6. *Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you, will performe* (or *Perfect*) *it until the day of Jesus Christ.* God who had begun the work of grace in them in their *Conversion*, which was his *first grace*, he would carry on and perfect that work by his *subsequent*, his following grace. Now to these two heads may the several acts of the Spirit of grace be reduced, in all which we shall find it *sufficient*. Begin with the former.

1.
The first *Grace* sufficient for Conversion.

The sufficiency of that *first grace*, that *working grace*. This we shall find sufficient for the work which it undertaketh, for the *Conversion* of those in whom it worketh. Of this *sufficiency*, this *chosen vessel*, this our Apostle had already had experience in himself. Being, before the grace of God met with him, a *sinner*, a great sinner, Ἁμαρτωλῶν πρῶτος, the *first*, the *chief*

of

of ſinners (as himſelf acknowledgeth) 1 Tim. 1. 15. *A Blaſphemer, and a Perſecutor, and Injurious* (as he particulariſeth) v. 13. as bad as who was worſt, yet obtaining mercy from God for the pardoning of his former ſins, he found his grace ſufficient for him, working powerfully and effectually in him for his Converſion. So it there followeth, v. 14. *But I obtained mercy, &c. And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant, with faith and love, which is in Chriſt Jeſus.*] *The grace of our Lord*;] the regenerating, renewing, ſanctifying grace of God; [*was exceeding abundant*] ὑπερεπλεόνασε; working a wonderful change in him; ſo as he was no more the man that he was, *I live, yet not I*, Gal. 2. 2. 20. No longer *Saul*, but *Paul*, having his name and nature changed; of a *Blaſphemer* he was now become a *believer*; of a *Perſecutor* and *Injurious*, he was now become a true *lover* of Chriſt and his Saints; Both which graces, his *Faith* and *Love*, he there maketh mention of, in oppoſition to thoſe his former ſins. Thus was the grace of God ſufficient for him, for his firſt converſion. And what he found and felt in himſelf; the like had many others in his time done. Being in ſome kinds as bad, yea *morally* far worſe then he, yet they had experience of the like ſufficiency of this grace for the changing and renewing of them. So had divers in the Church of *Corinth* done; whom he mindeth of it, 1 Cor. 6. 11. Where having reckoned up divers kinds of hainous ſinners, as *Fornicators*, *Idolaters*, *Adulterers*, and the like, he ſubjoineth, *And ſuch*

were some of you, but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, &c. They had found the grace of God sufficient for them, working effectually in them for the changing of them. And the like shall they do in whomsoever it undertaketh this work. It is that which the Lord saith he would do for his people, the people of the *Jewes*, after their return from Captivity, Ezek. 36. 25, 26. *I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean, from all your filthiness, and from all your Idols will I cleanse you; A new heart also will I give you*, &c. *And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them*; Promising to communicate his grace unto them, which should be sufficient for them, working effectually in them for their Conversion, and Salvation. And so it is where ever it is communicated. It is that which the Prophet *Jeremy*, speaking in the person of *God*, saith he heard *Ephraim*, (the people of *Israel*, the ten Tribes) say unto him, Jer. 31. 18. *Turn thou mè, and I shall be turned*; or (as the *Geneva* hath it,) *Convert thou me, and I shall be converted*; that is, give us grace to repent, and we shall repent. Which was accordingly granted and performed (as the verse following hath it,) *Surely, after that I was turned I repented*; After that God was pleased to work a gracious change in that people, by the working of his Spirit of grace co-operating with their afflictions and sufferings, then they came seriously to repent them of their sins,

ſins. Such is the *ſufficiency* of this grace for the working of true *Converſion* in the Soul.

Queſt. But (it may be ſaid) if it be thus *ſufficient*, how then cometh it to paſs, that it is not alwayes *efficient*; that it is not alwayes effectual in thoſe to whom it is tendred, but that ſome and many receive it in vain? This *Paul* beſeecheth his *Corinthians* that they would beware of, 2 Cor. 6. 1. *We then, as workers together with Chriſt, beſeech you alſo, that ye receive not the grace of God in vain*; Thereby intimating to them, that there were many who did ſo, in whom the grace of God being tendred to them, proved altogether ineffectual. Now how cometh this to paſs?

Queſtion. Why is it not alwayes Efficient.

Anſ. For this divers *Reaſons* might be aſſigned, two whereof I look upon as principal; the one of them to be found in *God*, the other in *men* themſelves.

Anſwer. Two Reaſons hereof aſſigned.

Reaſ. 1. The firſt in *God*, who doth not *give* this grace to all to whom it is tendred. It is that which our *Saviour* told his *Diſciples*, Math. 13. 11. when they demanded of him a Reaſon why he ſpake unto the people, as he did, in *Parables*, *He anſwered and ſaid unto them, Becauſe it is given unto you to know the myſteries of the Kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given.* So it is in preaching of the Goſpel, where the grace of God bringing ſalvation, is held forth, and tendred alike to all; it is not given alike to all to receive it. The free grace of God making the difference betwixt thoſe which do, and do not receive it. This (I ſay) depends upon Gods *free grace*,

1. God doth not give it to all.

his meer good will, and favour. *He hath mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will, he hardeneth*, Rom. 9.18. Hardeneth them, not by making their hearts hard, (which is Satans work, and their own,) but by withholding his grace from them, not mollifying, not preparing of them (which also is a work of his grace) by which means it cometh to pass that all the means which are made use of for their good prove ineffectual to them. Here is the first *Reason* of this inefficacy. Whereof let not any be so bold and daring as to demand a further *Reason*, why God should put this difference betwixt one and other. *Nay, but O man, who art thou that replyest against God, (or disputest with him?) Shall the thing formed say unto him that formed it, why hast thou made me thus: Hath not the Potter power over the clay*, &c. So the Apostle there stoppeth the mouths of those that shall dare to quarrel with this dispensation, *ver.* 20, 21. Gods *will* is both *Law* and *Reason*.

2. All do not receive it.

Reas. 2. Another Reason hereof is to be found in *men* themselves. They do not *receive this Grace as they ought to do*. They let it into the *ear*, giving it the hearing, but not into the *heart*, embracing of it. They shut the door of their Souls against it. Now upon this condition it is that Christ promiseth to communicate himself, and his grace to those to whom he cometh, *viz.* if they shall *open the door* to him. *Behold, I stand at the door and knock, if any man hear my voyce, and open the door, I will come in, and sup with him, and he with me.* Rev. 3. 20. It is not the bare

bare hearing of the voice of Christ speaking in his word, but the opening of the door, the letting of him into the soul, receiving and entertaining him by faith, and love, that will bring men to have communion with him, to be made partakers of his *grace* and *spirit*. Now this many will not do; they shut the door of their souls against Jesus Christ; not letting in the motions of his Spirit into their hearts, but opposing, resisting it. This is that which *Stephen* chargeth upon the *Jewes*, Act. 7. 51. *Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart, and ears, ye do alwayes resist the holy Ghost; as your fathers did so do you.* And so is it with many, they hear the word, but they do not let in the *monitions* of it, nor the *motions* of the Spirit into their hearts.

Q. Why, but is not the grace of God *irresistible*?

Question. Is not Gods grace Irresistible?

A. This is made a mater of controversie, eagerly debated betwixt *Arminians* and *Orthodox Divines*; I shall not now wade into it. In a word take this Resolution; *The Spirit of grace in it self is irresistible*, (I mean so irresistible, as that though it may be opposed, yet it cannot be conquered) but it doth not alwayes work in an irresistable way and manner. In it self (I say) it is irresistible, so as if it will put forth its strength, it is able to make way for the motions of it; able to open the door of the soul, though never so close shut against it, so as not only to illuminate the *mind*, but also to change the *will*; not by *forcing* and *constraining* it, (which being

Answer. It doth not alwayes work irresistibly.

contrary to the nature of the will, is inconsistent with it; should the will be forced, it should cease to be a will, the property whereof is to act freely) but by *sweetly inclining* it, of unwilling, making it willing to comply, and yield to such terms as are tendred to it; by which means the grace of God becometh effectual in it. But this I shall not enlarge upon, resting contented with this, that the Grace of God is sufficient for all that shall receive it; sufficient for their *Conversion.*

Application.

A Cordial for broken-hearted Penitent Sinners.

And is it so? (to make some *Application* of this Branch before I pass any further.) Let this serve as a soveraign *Cordial* for the bearing up of the drooping spirits of poor *broken-hearted penitent sinners. Penitent* sinners (I say) not *Presumptuous* ones; not such as St. *Jude* speaketh of, *Jude* 4. who *turn the grace of God into wantonness*, taking occasion from the *sufficiency* of Gods grace, his *pardoning* grace, to indulge themselvs in their sinfull wayes and courses, saying in their hearts that which *Paul* abominates the thought of, *Rom.* 6, 1. *Let us continue in sin, that grace may abound.* As for such I have not now to deal with. However I dare not say but that this grace of God may be *sufficient* for them; yet so long as they thus abuse it, let them never look that it will be *efficient* in them. They are *Penitent sinners* to whom I hold forth this Consolation; such as are in a like condition, as to their *Souls*, to that wherein *Paul* at his Conversion was, as to his *Body.* Of whom the story tells us, *Act.* 9. how that going to *Damascus* he

was

was *ſtruck down to the earth*, ver. 4. and after, having been for a time blind, upon *Ananias* his coming to him, *his eyes were opened*, ver. 18. So was it with him as to his *Body*. And ſo is it with all truly penitent ſinners, as to their *Souls*: Having their eyes opened to ſee the ſinfulneſs of their own hearts and lives, they are caſt down in the ſenſe and apprehenſion thereof, *abhorring themſelves, and repenting in duſt and aſhes.* (as *Job* ſaith he did, *cap.* 42. 6.) Now to ſuch, all ſuch, let this Cordial be applied. Let them hear what the Lord here ſaith unto his ſervant *Paul*, and hear him ſpeaking it unto them, *My grace is ſufficient for you.* As my *pardoning grace* is ſufficient to pardon all your ſins paſt, though never ſo many, never ſo great, *The Lord, the Lord God, merciſull and gracious, forgiving iniquity, trangreſſion and ſin*: that is, all ſins of what kinds or degrees ſoever, (ſo he proclaimeth himſelf) *Exod.* 34. 7. ſo my *ſanctifying grace* is ſufficient to work a bleſſed change in you. And hearing this from him, now let them make uſe of it for the bearing up of their Spirits, in this ſad conflict which they have, or may have, with Sin, Satan, Hell, Death. Let not any, nor all of theſe, ſo far prevail againſt you, as to drive you into deſperation; taking notice that there is hope, yea and *good hope* for you *through grace*: (as *Paul* ſaith there was for him, and his believing *Theſſalonians*, 2 *Theſ.* 2. 16.) *The grace of God is ſufficient for you.* It matters not what your condition hath been, or for the preſent is: You have lived in ſin, and made a trade of it, being habituated

bituated ſinners, ſo as through long cuſtom and continuance in it, it is become as natural to you as your meat and drink; yet let not this diſcourage. This Grace of God is ſufficient to make you *new creatures*; That God who hath your hearts in his hand, can change them, giving you a *new heart*. This is that he maketh promiſe of to his people *Iſrael*, (as you heard it from that Text) *Ezek.* 36. 26. *A new heart alſo will I give you, and a new ſpirit I will put within you.* And this he can do for you. What though your hearts for the preſent be no other than a ſink of ſin, moſt impure and unclean, full of inordinate luſts, yet hear what he there ſaith to them in the Verſe afore-going, *I will ſprinckle clean water upon you, and ye ſhall be clean*; freeing you, as from the *guilt* of ſin, by ſprinckling the blood of my Son Chriſt upon you for your *Juſtification*, ſo alſo from the *power* of it, by communicating my grace and Spirit unto you for your *Sanctification*. And ſuch a change is the *Spirit of grace* able to make in you.

The Grace of God ſufficient to make them new Creatures

Reply. I, but (ſaith the drooping Sinner) I have *reſiſted this Spirit of grace*, my heart hath been, and is, a hard and inflexible heart, not yielding to the motions of this Spirit. God hath often called upon me by his Word,, but I have often ſtoped my ears againſt him: He hath allured me by his Mercies, and terrified me by his Judgments, yet none have hitherto ſo wrought upon me, as to bring me home unto him. So impenetrable hath this heart of mine been to this grace of his.

This Spirit of grace hath been reſiſted.

A. Yet

A. Yet despair not. This maketh thy case indeed so much the more *difficult*, but yet not *desperate*: still Gods grace is sufficient for thee; he can take away this hard and stony heart. So that his Promise to his people *Israel* there goeth on, v. 26. *I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and will give you a heart of flesh*; that is, I will take away the hard and obdurate heart from you, and will give you a soft, a tender, and a pliable heart, that shall be ready to receive the impressions of my grace, and to be guided and governed by my Spirit. And such is the sufficiency of Gods Grace for thee.

Answer. Yet is it sufficient?

Which that it may be *Efficient* in thee, do not again put it from thee by despairing of it, and so shutting the door of thy soul against it: Thou hast resisted it, but do so no more. Now let it in, hearkning to it, yielding up thy self to be wrought upon by it. So doing, now doubt not of an effectual operation. Having tasted of Gods *Prevening* and *Preparing* Grace (as the Schools distinguish) his *Preventing* Grace in putting some good motions, good desires and purposes into thy soul, desires after Supernatural grace; his *Preparing* Grace, in inclining thy will to hearken to his Word, and to yield obedience to the dictates of his Spirit; (both which are the work of divine and supernatural Grace,) now doubt not of finding the *sufficiency* of his *working grace* for the changing and renewing of thee in thy mind, will and affections, and so making thee a *new Creature.*

The Efficiency of it not to be despaired of

Gratia Præveniens: Præparans.

Onely

Direction.

The Spirit of Grace to be waited on in the use of Means.

Onely (to give a word of *Direction*) see that thou *wait upon the Spirit of grace*, in the use of such means as it is wont to work by. The two chief whereof are the *Word* and *Prayer*.

1. The Word Preached.

1. The *Word*, the Word *Preached*, which is the ordinary means in and by which the Spirit useth to work. Thence is it that the Messengers of the Gospel are called *Ministers of the Spirit*, and their Ministration or service, *the Ministration of the Spirit*. 2 Cor. 3. 6, 8. Διάκονοι & Διακονία Πνεύματος. In as much as by them, through their ministery, the preaching of the Gospel, God is wont to communicate his Spirit; thereby working *grace* in the hearts of his Elect. As the grace of *faith*, (of which the Apostle saith that it *cometh by hearing*, Rom. 10. 17. by hearing of the Word preached) so other sanctifying and saving graces. See then that with care and conscience you attend upon this Ordinance of God, where it is dispensed according to his mind and will; *Watching daily at wisdoms gates, waiting at the posts of her door*, Prov. 8. 34. Like as those impotent persons are said to have done, who lay at the Pool of *Bethesday*, waiting for the time when the *Angel should move the water*, John 5. 3. So wait you upon God in the use of this Ordinance of his, until he shall please (which in his due time he will) to send down his holy Spirit, and make it effectual for the healing of your sin-sick souls.

2. Prayer.

2. And to this joyn *Prayer*. Herein imitating this our *Apostle*, who in this his *Conflict* (as you have heard) *prayed thrice*, frequently and earnestly.

earneſtly. The like do you, Be frequent and earneſt in ſoliciting of the throne of grace, begging this grace from *the God of all grace*, that he would ſend his *Spirit* into your hearts, and that ye may find and feel the effectual work of it. Which doing, now reſt comfortably aſſured of receiving a gracious Anſwer from him, Yea of obtaining what you deſire. *If ye, being evil,* (ſaith our *Saviour* to his *Diſciples*) *know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more ſhall your heavenly Father give the holy Spirit to them that aske him?* Luke 11. 13. As for other things, as temporal bleſſings, God may, and often doth, with-hold them, though never ſo earneſtly ſought for, ſeeing them not to be expedient for his people (as here he did from his Apoſtle what he deſired.) But as for his *Spirit*, his *Spirit of grace*, never did ſoul ſeriouſly and earneſtly ſeek it, but hath had it given unto it; receiving, though not ſuch a meaſure of grace as it would have had, yet ſuch a meaſure as God hath ſeen to be ſufficient for it. And thus have I now done with the firſt *Branch* of this uſeful *Doctrine*, the ſufficiency of this *firſt grace*, this *Working, Converting* grace Paſs we to the ſecond.

2. Gods Co-working or Following Grace here chiefly intended.

As the working, ſo the *Co-working grace* of God, his following and aſſiſting grace, that is alſo *ſufficient*. This is the *grace* which the Text hath a more ſpecial eye at. *Paul* was now *under grace*, having felt the power of Gods *firſt grace*, his *working* grace, in his *Converſion*, being in a *ſtate of grace*. And being ſo, the Lord here telleth him that his *Grace was ſufficient for him.*

As

This Grace sufficient for all that are in a state of Grace.

As it had already been *efficient* in him for the working of so great a change as it had done; so it was also now *sufficient* for him. And so it is for all those who are in the same estate, such as are in a state of grace. Having tasted of that first grace, *Tasted that the Lord is gracious* (as the Apostle saith of Believers) 1 Pet. 2. 3. having had some experimental knowledge of the mercy and goodness of God, as in pardoning their sins, so in regenerating of them, making them *new Creatures*, now it may be said of them, and to them, that the *grace of God*, his subsequent and assisting grace, is *sufficient* for them. So it is, and that to all intents and purposes, sufficient to do for them what ever it is that they stand in need of in order to their salvation. For the opening and demonstrating of which I shall descend into some particulars, shewing you for what this *Assisting grace* of God is sufficient.

The sufficiency of this Grace set forth in divers Particulars.

Partic. 1. The Establishing of them, keeping them from Falling.

That which I shall begin with, is the *Establishing* of them. For this is this Grace sufficient. Having brought them into a new state, a state of grace, it is sufficient to uphold them in that state, to establish them. *Uphold* (or *establish*) *me with thy free spirit*, (it is *Davids* prayer for himself) Psal. 51. 12. And it is *Peters* Apprecation for the Saints, to whom he writeth a *Prayer* which he putteth up for them, and a *Blessing* which he pronounceth upon them, 1 Pet. 5. 10. *The God of all grace*, &c. *make you perfect, confirm, strengthen and stablish you.* This is Gods work, the work of his grace, as to begin the good Work in the hearts of his Elect, so to con-

confirm and ſtabliſh them. *Now he which eſtabliſheth us with you in Chriſt, and hath anointed us, is God,* (ſaith *Paul* to his *Corinthians,*) 2 Cor. 1. 21. Both theſe are his work, firſt to *annoint* his Elect people, by communicating his Spirit of grace unto them, which he doth in their *Converſion*, then to *eſtabliſh* them. Even as it is in the works of *Nature*; God firſt *creates*, giveth a being to his creatures, then he continueth that being to them by preſerving, upholding and maintaining them. *He upholdeth all things by the word of his power.* Heb. 1. 3. *Thou preſerveſt man and beaſt*, Pſal. 36. 6. So is it in the work of *grace*, God firſt beginning it, he then continueth it. Having made his people *new-Creatures*, they being *the work of his hands* (as the Prophet *Iſaiah* ſaith of them, *Iſa.* 64. 8. and that not onely in a general way, by *Creation*, as other creatures are, but in a *ſpecial* way, by *Regeneration* (as Mr. *Calvin* expounds that Text,) he upholdeth his own work in them, eſtabliſhing them. Which is a thing that his *grace* is ſufficient for. Be they never ſo weak in themſelves, yet that is ſufficient to uphold them. So ſaith our Apoſtle of the *weak Brother*, Rom. 14. 4. *He ſhall be holden up* (or *eſtabliſhed*, στηθήσεται) *for God is able to make him ſtand.* Having ſet them on their feet, it is able to uphold them, to keep them from falling. *Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling* (ſaith St. *Jude*, ſpeaking of *God our Saviour*) Jude 24. This is God able to do for his people, though being in themſelves weak, they are ſubject to fall; yet by the power

of

of his grace he is able to keep them ἀπταίστους, *Illabiles*, to keep them from falling into sin. To keep them *faultless*. So it there followeth, *And to present you faultless before the presence of his glory*, Ἀμώμους, free from gross and scandalous evils, so as the *Momus*'s of the world shall have nothing to upbraid, or charge you with. Thus God is able to keep his people; And thus he will keep them, if they be not wanting to his Grace. *The Lord shall keep the feet of his Saints* (saith *Hannah* in her song) 1 Sam. 2. 9. that is, protecting, and directing them, ordering their Affections and Actions, keeping them in their wayes. *He shall give his Angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy wayes, they shall bear thee up in their hands, least thou dash thy foot against a stone*,] so the Psalmist, Psal. 91. 11, 12. sets forth the security and safety of a godly man, whom God hath such a care of, that whilest he endeavours to keep close unto him, walking conscienciously before him, he will keep him from those dangers and miscarriages which otherwise he is obnoxious to; as from Temporal, so from Spiritual evils. So *Paul* tells his *Thessalonians*, 2 Thes. 3. 3. *The Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you, and keep you from evil.* Ἀπὸ τοῦ πονηροῦ, from that *evil one*, *Satan*, to keep you from his snares and plots, so as you shall not be surprized and foiled by him. This is that which our *Saviour* teacheth his *Disciples* to pray for in that form of prayer which he set them and us, Matth. 6. *Deliver us from evil*; or from that *evil one*, Ἀπὸ τοῦ πονηροῦ. And what they

they pray for, God is able to grant; for this his grace is sufficient, to keep the feet of his Saints, to keep them *from falling*, falling into sin.

Object. But is it so (may some say) how is it then that they do fall, and that so frequently, yea and sometimes so fouly as they do? Instances hereof we have but too many. Eminent Saints, stars of the first magnitude; who have had a larger measure of grace meted out unto them then others, how have some of them fallen, as *David* and *Peter*, &c. Now by this it may seem, that either the grace of God is not sufficient for all, to uphold them, or else that he is not willing to communicate it to some.

Object. How is it that those who are in a state of grace do fall into sin.

Ans. To return Answer to this briefly: 1. Thus indeed it is, and that too often, but whence is it? Not from any *Deficiency* in the *grace* of *God*; but in *themselves*, in not *co-operating* with that grace which they have already received, not making that use of it that they ought and might; not keeping a strict watch over themselves; forgetting that which *Solomon* minds them of, Prov. 4. 23. to *Keep their hearts with all diligence*; and that which our Saviour calls upon his Disciples to do, Matth. 26. 41. to *Watch and pray, that they enter not into temptation.* By this means it is that *Satan*, who lyeth in wait, to take all advantages breaks in upon them, shamefully foiling them by his Temptations. Neither are they wary, as they ought to be, for the avoiding of the occasions of sin, and so coming near the ditch their foot slips, and they fall in. Nor

Answer. 1. This is from themselves, not co-operating with the grace which they have received.

so careful in the use of those means, and observing those Rules and Directions which God hath prescribed them. Now hence it cometh to pass that that Grace, which is sufficient for them, becometh not so effectual in them as otherwise it would. Even as it is with an *infirme person*, being in a course of Physick, his Physician administers to him a Remedy proper for his Malady, what might be sufficient for his Cure, to make and keep him sound; But withal he prescribes him such and such Rules for Diet, Exercise, &c. Now he not observing these, finds not that benefit which he expected, and otherwise might have had. So is it here. God in communicating his grace to his people, he prescribes them such and such *Rules* for the ordering of themselves, that so they might co-operate with his grace; which is sufficient for them, but they not observing, but neglecting them, by this means it cometh to pass that it becometh not so effectual in them as otherwise it would be: As it was with *Sampson*; not keeping his hair from cutting, which being a *Nazarite*, he was by Gods express command injoyned to do, he fell into the hands of his enemies, the *Philistims*, and became a prey to them, Judg. 16. 19, 21. so is it oft-times with the servants of God; not following his *Directions*, not observing his *Ordinances*, they fall into the hands of their spiritual enemies, so as to be foiled by them; For which they may thank themselves.

2. This God permits, with an eye

2. This is a thing which *God permits*. He suffers his people thus to fall; which he doth with

with an eye to *himself*, to *them*, to *others*.

1. To *himself*, for the further manifestation of his *grace* and *power*, as in *pardoning*, so in *restoring* of them; (of which more anon.)

1. To himself for the manifesting of his Grace and Power.

2. To *them*, that he may make them know *him*, and *themselves*; his power, their own *weakness*. His power in supporting them whilest they do stand; their own weakness, which is such as being left to themselves they cannot but fall. Both these, God will have his people to know, that so giving to him the glory of the one, they may be made more humble by the other; that they may learn not to stand upon their own feet, to put any confidence in themselves, to trust in their own strength, but in him whose *strength is made perfect in weakness*. *Jacob* wrestling with the *Angel* prevailes with him, but yet to make him sensible of his own weakness, his humane frailty, he receiveth a maim in his thigh, that so he might not be too much puffed up with the glory of that victory, *Gen.* 32. 25. Thus God sometimes leaves his dear servants to the sad experience of their own infirmity, suffering them to stumble and fall, and so for a time to halt, that so they may not be exalted above measure, which otherwise they are subject to.

2. To them, that they may the better know God and themselves.

3. To *others*; that others may be warned by their harms, and so be the more jealous over themselves; more careful of their own standing, more fearful of falling; which our Apostle mindeth Christians of, *Be not high minded, but fear*, Rom. 11. 20. *Let him that thinketh he standeth*

3. To Others; that they may be warned by them.

(that he hath a sure standing) *take heed least he fall*, 1 Cor. 10. 12. For these and some other ends best known to himself, God suffers his people thus to fall, whom yet his grace is sufficient to keep from falling.

Partic. 2. This Grace sufficient to keep them in Falling, that they shall not fall Totally.

And (2.) as it is sufficient to keep them from falling, so *in falling*; so to keep them, as that though they do fall, and fall *foully*, yet they shall not fall *Totally*. It is that which *David* saith of a righteous man, Psal. 37. 24. *Though he fall, he shall not utterly be cast down, for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand.* Righteous men are subject to fall as well as others. *A just man falleth seven times*, Prov. 24 16. *Seven times*, that is, often. Falling, as into miseries and calamities, so into *sins*. But though he thus fall through the infirmity of the flesh, yet he is so upheld by the power of divine grace, as that he shall not *utterly be cast down*, he is thereby kept from a total defection. Though he fall into a sin, yet he shall not fall from *grace*. It is the promise which the Lord maketh to his people, Jer. 32. 40. *I will make an everlasting Covenant with them, &c. And I will put my fear into their hearts, and they shall not depart from me.* Such is the Covenant which God maketh with his people, the *Covenant of grace*, an *everlasting Covenant*. Putting his *fear*, his *grace*, into their hearts, they shall be so kept by the power hereof, as that they shall not *depart* from him, not utterly, not *totally*. However through weakness and infirmity they may sometimes *turn aside*, yet they shall not *depart*, so as utterly to fall from him,

him, and his grace. This is that which our Saviour tells *Peter*, Luke 22. 31, 32. *I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not.* And what he did for him he hath done the like for others, even for all that believe on him. *Neither pray I for these alone* (viz. his *Apostles*) *but for them also which shall believe on me through their word* (so he declares it) Joh. 17. 20. By his intercession impetrating this for them that their faith shall not *fail*. However it may be shaken, and so fail in the Ἐνέργεια, in the acting of it, (as *Peters* did, when he denyed his Master) yet it shall not totally fail. *Peters* faith failed in his *Mouth*, but not so in his *Heart*. Thus grace may fail in a true believer as to the *Act*, but not so as to the *Habit*: In their greatest defections there is yet a *Principle of Life* in them. As it was with that young man *Eutichus*, Acts 20. v. 9. *Falling from the third loft, he was taken up dead*, that is, *for dead*, (as it may be construed) so apprehended to be by those that saw him, who were much troubled at this so sad and sudden an accident. But *Paul* coming to him, and embracing him, said, *Trouble not your selves, for his life is in him*, v. 10. Even so fareth it sometimes with Gods *Saints*, such as are set upon the *third loft*, being above others in grace, they by some great and grievous fall may seem both to others and themselves to be *dead*, to have no life of grace left in them, but yet having been once truly regenerated, their *life is in them*; this shall not utterly fail. For this, express and full is that known Text of St. *John*, 1 Joh. 3. 9. *Whosoever is born of God, he doth*

not commit sin, for his seed remaineth in him, and he cannot sin.] He *doth not*, he *cannot* sin, ὁ δύναται ἁμαρτάνειν, that is, so fall from the grace of God, as to be given over unto sin, to be brought under the power and government of it. No, *his seed abideth in him*, *semen gratiæ*, that seed of grace, which was sown in his heart by the Holy Ghost at his first Conversion. This still remaineth, and remaining (as the seed doth which is buried in the earth) it will in due time put forth, and shew it self again. Such is the *sufficiency* of divine grace for the keeping and upholding of true believers in their falling, that though they do fall, yet they shall not utterly be cast down, not fall *totally*.

Partic. 3. To restore them being fallen.

And (3.) as this grace is sufficient to keep them *from* falling, and *in* falling, so to *Restore* them being fallen; to raise them up, and set them upon their feet again, to restore them to their former condition, so as they shall not fall *finally*. This is that which the *Wiseman* saith of a *Just Man*, in that Text even now cited, Prov. 24. 16. *He falleth seven times, and riseth up again.* Fall he may, and that frequently and dangerously, as into sufferings, so into sins, but he falls not *finally*, he riseth again, being raised and restored by the power of divine grace. Of this had *Peter* experience in himself. He fell, and fell foully in denying and forswearing his Lord and Master, but no sooner did his Master *turn to him and look upon him* (as St. *Luke* reports it, Luke 22. 61.) looking upon him (as *Theophilact* saith) Ἀγαθῷ βλέμματι, with a benigne, a gracious aspect,

aſpect, but preſently his heart relented for what he had done, *He went out and wept bitterly*, v. 62. ſo being by repentance reſtored from his fall. And the like experience many other of the *Saints* of God have had. Having through weakneſs fallen and fallen dangerouſly, yet they have found the grace of God ſufficient for their reſtauration. Such a *Phyſician* is God to his people, he knoweth how to heal all their infirmities. *I am the Lord that healeth thee* (ſaith he to his people *Iſrael*,) Exod. 15.26. *That healeth all thy diſeaſes* (ſaith *David*) *Pſal.* 103. 3. As of the *Body*, ſo of the *Soul*; *Heal my ſoul*, *for I have ſinned againſt thee* (ſaith he) Pſal. 41. 4. There is never a *ſin*, but maketh a *wound* in the ſoul, ſome deeper then others, all of them mortal and deadly, threatning death, unleſs they be healed. Now this is Gods work, the work of his grace, to heal the *Back-ſlidings* of his people. This is that he promiſeth to do for his people *Iſrael*, Jer. 3. 22. repeated by the Prophet *Hoſea*, cap. 14. v. 4. *Return, and I will heal your back-ſlidings.* And this his grace is ſufficient to do. *Heal me O Lord, and I ſhall be healed*, ſaith the Prophet *Jeremy*, intending (as is conceived) a temporal deliverance out of the hands of his enemies, which he earneſtly deſired from his God, being aſſured that he was able to work it for him, Jer. 17. 14. And the like may a poor ſinner, whoſe ſoul is wounded with ſin, ſay unto him, *Heal me O Lord, and I ſhall be healed.* Such is the ſufficiency of this grace, that it is able to work a perfect cure, where ever it undertaketh it,

restoring the Soul to former *Rectitude*, and to former *Comfort*. In these two consisteth this *Cure*; and both these the grace of God is sufficient for.

1. To former Rectitude.

1. To restore to former *Rectitude*: So it is, the falls of Gods Children, are oft-times like that which *Mephibosheth* being a child, took from the armes of his Nurse, whereby he became *lame of his feet*, 2 Sam. 4. 4. Even so by their falls, their souls (it may be) contract a lameness, being (as it were) out of joynt, so as they do not walk in the wayes of God so vigorously as sometimes they did. But this grace of God is sufficient to cure, to set their souls in joynt again, and to cure their lameness. Such cures Christ wrought upon the *Bodies* of those that came unto him, being *lame*, he *healed* them; which he did by a *word*. And with like facility he is able to work the like cure upon the Souls of men; being become lame, he can heal them by the work of his Spirit, restoring them, being fallen, to former *Rectitude*.

2. To former Comfort.

2. And as to former Rectitude, so to former *Comfort*. So it is, sometimes by their falls, the *Bones* of Gods children are not only dislocated and out of joynt, but (as it were) *broken*. So it was with *David* after that fall of his in the matter of *Bathsheba* and *Uriah*, his *bones* (as he complains) were even *broken*, Psal. 51. 8. *The bones which thou hast broken*. Broken with the sense of that foul sin of his, which lay so heavy upon his Spirit, that he could have no rest for it, *There is no rest in my Bones because of my sin* (so he elsewhere crieth out) *Psal.* 38. 3. Now in this case the grace of God is sufficient to work a cure upon

upon them, by binding up these broken hearts. *The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, he hath sent me to bind up the broken hearted* (saith the Prophet *Isaiah*) Cap. 61. 1. This was he to do as a servant, a *Minister* of God, by speaking a word of comfort in the name of God to them. And this is God able to do by sending his *Spirit* into the heart; which being *the Comforter*, (as our Saviour calleth it, *Joh.* 14. 26, *&c.*) the *Spirit of Consolation*, it can make broken bones to rejoyce. *Make me to hear joy and gladness, that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoyce*, (saith *David* there) *Psal.* 51. 12. *restoring unto his people the joy of his salvation*, (which he there prayeth for, *v.* 12.) the sence and feeling of his love and favour. Thus as the *Sun* breaking forth, dissipates and scatters those dark clouds which before hid the face of it from the earth, so the Lord lifting up the light of his countenance upon his people, he can scatter those dark clouds of their sins, which have for a time hid his face from them, restoring comfort unto them. And this he maketh promise of that he will do to the penitent sinner. *Isa.* 57. 18. *I have seen his wayes, and will heal him, I will lead him also, and restore comforts unto him.* [*I have seen his wayes,*] his sinfull wayes and courses, wherein he hath walked contrary to me; yet upon his returning unto me, *I will heal him*, restoring comfort, the joy of my salvation unto him. Such is the sufficiency of divine grace for the *restoring* of those that are fallen, to restore them to their former *rectitude*, and to their former *comfort*. Here is a third Particular.

In

Partic. 4. To strengthen them.

In the Fourth place, as this *Grace* is sufficient to restore them, so to *strengthen* them. This the best of Saints, being in themselves weak, have need of. So *Peter* apprehended it, and therefore beggeth this for those to whom he writeth, in that Text forecited, 1 Pet. 5. 10. *The God of all grace make you perfect, establish, strengthen you.* And the like doth *Paul* for his *Ephesians*, Cap. 3. v. 16. *That he might grant you according to the riches of his glory, that ye may be strengthened by his Spirit in the inner man.* To be strengthned in the *inner man*, εἰς τὸν ἔσω ἄνθρωπον, the mind, the soul, that is the work of the *Spirit*, the Spirit of Grace: and this work this Spirit of *grace is sufficient for*. Of the truth hereof this our Apostle had had great experience in himself, who tells his *Corinthians*, 2 Cor. 12. 10. *When I am weak, then am I strong.* When weak in *himself*, in his own apprehension, then strong in *Christ*; when weak in the *flesh*, then strong in the *Spirit*. By the assistance of which he was enabled to do whatsoever he was put upon. *I am able to do all things through Christ that strengtheneth me*, (so he tells his *Philippians*) cap. 4. 13. πάντα ἰσχύω, *Omnia valeo, I am able for all things*, whether to *do*, or *suffer*. Such a kind of *Omnipotency* there is in the grace of God, that it is able to make the weakest of his servants able to go through with what ever work he shall call them to. Be it to *wrastle with Temptations*, to *subdue Corruptions*, to *perform Duties*, to *endure Sufferings*, In these four lyeth a chief part of a Christians work. And all and every of these, Divine

Inabling them to a fourfold work.

Grace

Grace is sufficient to enable him for. See it in the Particulars.

1. To *wrestle with Temptations.* These *Conflicts*, whilst they are here, Christians are continually subject to. As *Paul* saith of himself when he was come into *Macedonia*, *Our flesh* (saith he) *had no rest, but we were troubled on every side, without were fightings, within were fears,* Ἔξωθεν μάχαι, ἔσωθεν φόβοι, 2 Cor. 7. 5. He was exercised with sundry kinds of *Temptations*, some whereof were *outward*, others *inward*. Even so fareth it with the best of Saints, they are subject to be exercised as he was, with both these kinds of Temptations, *outward and inward*. *Outward* from the *World*. Of which there are two sorts, some *deterring* and *discouraging*, others *enticing* and *alluring*: Deterring from that which is *good*, enticing to that which is *evil*. *Inward*, either *Satanical Injections*, or *Divine Desertions*. Now as to all these this *grace* is *sufficient* to *strengthen* them, enabling them so to wrastle, as that they shall not be overcome by them. Reflect we upon them severally.

1. To wrestle with Temptations.

For *Outward Temptations*, Temptations from the *World*; which (as I said) are of two sorts, some *deterring*, others *inticing*. Both these Gods Saints and Servants are subject to. And both these his grace is sufficient to enable them to wrastle with.

1. With outward Temptations.

1. With *Temptations deterring*. Such is that *opposition* which the servants of God meet with in and from the world, having many stumbling blocks cast in their way, to stop or hinder them in

1. Temptations deterring and discouraging.

in their course, meeting with many discouragements from those who like not the way which they walk in. But the grace of God is sufficient to bear up their Spirits, and to carry them on in their course in despite of all these. So it was to *Paul*, who had frequent experience of these kinds of *Temptations*, having (as he saith) *fightings without*, meeting with *many Adversaries*, (as he tells his *Corinthians*) 1 Cor. 16. 9. Ἀντικείμενοι πολλοί, many that opposed themselves against him. Some whereof were *secret*, others *open*. Such were the *Jewes* generally, whom we find withstanding him wherever he went; not only *Blaspheming his Doctrine*, which they did *Act.* 18. 6. *They opposed themselves and blasphemed; speaking evil of that way before the multitude* (as we have it) *Act.* 19. 9. that is, of the Doctrine of the Gospel which he preached; but also *laying in wait for his Person*, seeking to take away his life, as we find it often, *Act.* 20. 3. & 23. 3. &c. Yea so inraged were some of them, that they engaged themselves by oath to do it; more then forty entring into conspiracy against him, *banding together, and binding themselves under a curse, saying that they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed Paul*, (as we have it) *Act.* 23. 12. So many and so great were the dangers that he was continually exposed to; which could not but exceedingly affect him, causing fears and terrors to arise in his heart. Having such *fightings without*, well might he (as he saith) have *terrors within*. Yet in the midst of these Temptations, by the power of divine

grace

grace he was ſupported, his ſpirit was born up, the Lord comforting him. So St. *Luke* ſetteth it forth in his ſtory, *Act.* 23. 10, 11. When the people were ſo enraged againſt him, that he was in danger of being *pulled in pieces* by them, *The night following the Lord ſtood by him and ſaid, Be of good cheer Paul,* &c. And the like he did again when he was brought before *Nero* to anſwer for his life, his friends all forſaking him, *The Lord ſtood with him, and ſtrengthened him,* (as he himſelf tells *Timothy*) 2 Tim. 4. 17. Thus was he comforted and ſtrengthened by the power of divine grace, ſo as he was enabled to reſiſt thoſe *Temptations*, not giving way to his fears, but going on in his work. So he tells the Elders of *Epheſus* at *Miletum*, appealing to them, who could atteſt what he ſaid, *Act.* 20. 18, 19. *Ye know* (ſaith he) *from the firſt day that I came into Aſia, after what manner I have been with you at all ſeaſons, ſerving the Lord with all humility of mind; and with many tears and temptations which befel me by the lying in wait of the Jewes.* Thus was the grace of God ſufficient for him, bearing him up in theſe conflicts, ſupporting him under theſe diſcouragements. And the like the Lord here tells him it was able to do for him in this condition wherein he now was. Being *buffeted by a meſſenger of Satan*, either *Hymeneus*, or *Alexander the Copperſmith* (as I I told you ſome conceive of it) or ſome other Inſtruments of Satan, who ſought to do him all the miſchief they could, creating to him a great deal of trouble and diſquietment, in this condi-

tion

tion the Lord gives him to know that his *grace was ſufficient* for him, to ſupport and bear him up under this Temptation. And ſo other of the Saints of God have found it, who have had the like experience hereof, being after the like manner ſtrengthened and ſupported, ſo as they have not given way to inordinate fears and terrors in the midſt of the greateſt dangers. So was it with *David*, who bearing himſelf upon the ſtrength of his God, was bold and confident, not fearing the machinations and deſigns of his enemies. *The Lord is my light and my ſalvation* (ſaith he) *whom ſhall I fear? The Lord is the ſtrength of my life, of whom ſhall I be afraid?* Pſal. 27. 1 *Though an Hoſt ſhould encamp againſt me, my heart ſhall not fear; though warr ſhould riſe againſt me, in this will I be confident*, v. 3. So again, *Pſal.* 56. 4. *In God have I put my truſt, I will not fear what man can do unto me.* Which he repeats *v.* 11. as alſo Pſal. 118. 6. *The Lord is on my ſide, I will not fear what man can do unto me.* And what he ſaid, it is no other then what all true believers, who have an intereſt in God, having him for their God, may ſay, and that with like confidence that he did. So much the Apoſtle tells them, *Heb.* 13. 5, 6. *The Lord hath ſaid, I will not leave thee, nor forſake thee*; So that we may boldly ſay, *The Lord is my help, I will not fear what man ſhall do unto me.* Such is the power of Divine Grace, that it is ſufficient to bear up the hearts and ſpirits of the ſervants of God, in the midſt of whatever *deterring and diſcouraging Temptations*, ſo as they ſhall not be overcome by them.

And

And the like may be said (in the 2d. place) of *Alluring Temptations*; which are far more dangerous then the former. Such is the *Lust* of the world (as St. *John* calls it) 1 Joh. 2. 17. *The World passeth away, and the Lust thereof.* Ἐπιθυμία αὐτοῦ, that is, those things in the world which are so earnestly desired and lusted after. These in the verse fore-going he reduceth to three heads, *All that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life*, &c. v. 16. Here is the worlds τὸ πᾶν, all that is in it, that is of chief esteem and account in it with men of the world, the three *Pearls* in their eyes, *Pleasures*, *Riches*, *Honours*; which being inordinately affected, produce those three sinful lusts, *Voluptuousness*, *Covetousness*, *Ambition*. Now to these and other the like lusts, by reason of these Temptations presented to them, Gods own children are subject as well as others, But such is the *sufficiency of his grace*, that it is able to keep them in the midst of these snares from being intangled by them, to keep them in the world from the lusts of it, so as they shall not be overcome by it, but overcome it. *Whatsoever is born of God* (saith that Apostle) *overcometh the world*, 1 Joh. 5. 4. Every true believer, for of all such he concludeth that they are so born, v. 1. *Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God.* Believing him, and believing on him, they are *born of God*, regenerated by his spirit, and made his children by the grace of Adoption; And being such, he saith of them, they *overcome the world*; that is the

2. Temptations Alluring, the Lusts of the world.

Temptations,

Temptations, the lusts of it, which (as St. *Peter* saith of them, 1 Pet. 2. 11.) *war against the soul.* These Gods children overcome, not by any strength of their own, but by the power of his *grace.* So it there followeth in the latter clause of that verse, *This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.* *Faith* laying hold upon Christ, who hath obtained this victory for all that shall believe on him, *be of good cheer, I have overcome the world* (saith he to his Apostles) Joh. 16. *ult.* applying his *Merit*, and drawing *vertue* from him; this is *the victory*, the means whereby Christians come to conquer the world; which having in measure done already, not being *led Captive* by it, as sometimes they were, they (being inabled by the strength of Christ, *I can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth me*, Phil. 4. 13. Ἐνδυναμοῦντί με χριστῷ, Christ inabling of me) shall proceed and go on in this their warfare till they have made a full and final conquest of this their enemy; which they shall certainly do. So much (as *Beza* noteth) is intimated in that Text, *This is the victory that overcommeth the world;* ἡ νίκη ἡ νικήσασα; *quæ vicit* (as he renders it) which *hath overcome* the world. Thus having in the former part of the verse made use of the *Present* tense, whatsoever is born of God *overcometh* the world, νικᾷ, *Vincit*, here he subjoines the *Preterperfect* tense, ἡ νικήσασα, *quæ vicit*, which *hath overcome*, thereby intimating (as he observeth) that however this Conflict betwixt the *World* and *believers* is still continued, yet

Beza Gr. Annotat. in loc.

yet they ſhall obtain the victory, and that as certainly as if it were done already. Such is the power of this *grace* of God, which *appearing* to his people, *worketh* in them, appearing to their eyes in the doctrine of the Goſpel, worketh in their hearts, it *teacheth* them, and that effectually, *to deny ungodlineſs and worldly luſts* (as the Apoſtle ſaith of it) Tit. 2. 12. *Worldly luſts*, κοσμικὰς ἐπιθυμίας, inordinate deſires after the things of the world, which are ſo luſted after by the greateſt part in the world. Theſe the grace of God teacheth Chriſtians to deny, to renounce and forſake, in meaſure alſo inabling them ſo to do. So as whileſt they live in the world yet they are in meaſure freed from the Infection of it. Being by Regeneration made *partakers of the divine nature* (as St. *Peter* hath it, 2 Pet. 1. 4. Θείας φύσεως, not ὐσίας, not the divine *eſſence* and *ſubſtance*, which is incommunicable, but divine *qualities* and *graces*, whereby men are in meaſure made like unto God, transformed into his image) they have now *eſcaped the corruption that is in the world through luſt.* Ἀποφυγόντες, having fled from it, and being freed from the reigning power of it. And having thus *eſcaped* it, now by the ſame power they *keep themſelves* from it, ſo as they are *unſpotted* of it. So St. *James* deſcribeth true *Religion*, Jam. 1. ult. *Pure Religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this*, &c. *For a man to keep himſelf unſpotted of the world*; free from the ſins of the times and places wherein he liveth, ſo as not to be tainted and corrupted by the evil example of

others. This by the power of divine grace assisting them, Gods Saints are inabled to do. Thus did *Lot* keep himself whilest he lived in *Sodom*. *Seeing* and *hearing* what he did, the *filthy conversation* of the generality of them, *he vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds* (as St. *Peter* saith of him) 2 Pet. 2. 7, 8. but he was not infected by them. Being kept by the power of divine grace, he still retained his integrity, he still remained (as he is there called) Δίκαιος Λὼτ, *just*, *righteous Lot*. Thus are the *Bodies* of men sometimes by a special providence preserved in the midst of a general *Infection* (as the *Bodies* and *Garments* of those three *Worthies* were in the midst of the furnace, which were not scorched, though the fire was seventimes hotter then it used to be (as we have the Story, Dan. 3.) so as though the *Pestilence* rage, yet *it cometh not nigh them* (as the Psalmist hath it, Psal. 91. 7.) Even so are the *souls* of Gods Saints by his *especial grace* preserved in the midst of a general corruption, so as they are not tainted with it, but (as *Paul* prayeth that his *Phillippians* might be, Phil. 2. 15.) they are *kept blameless and harmless, without rebuke in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom they shine as lights in the world*. Such is the sufficiency of this grace for the inabling of the children of God to resist those Temptations which they meet with in, and from the *world*, whether *Deterring*, or *Alluring*. Thus I have done with the former sort of Temptations, such as are *Outward*.

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Besides these there are another sort, *Inward Temptations*, such as seize more immediately upon the *Inward man*, the *Soul*. Such are *Satanical Injections*, and *Spiritual Desertions*; both which, where they take place, cause sad conflicts in the soul. But such is the sufficiency of divine grace that it can inable a Christian to wrestle with them, so as not to be overcome by them. Begin with the former.

2. Inward Temptations.

1. *Satanical, Diabolical Injections.* So it is, the *chief enemy* that a Christian hath to conflict with, is *Satan*. Who is called their *Adversary, your Adversary the Devil*, 1 Pet. 5. 8. And *the Enemy*, Mat. 13. 39. *The Enemy that sowed them* (viz. the *Tares*) *is the Devil*. Ὁ ἐχθρος. The Arch-enemy of Mankind; with whom Christians have more dangerous conflicts then with any other creatures. *We wrestle not against flesh and blood* (saith the Apostle) *but against Principalities and Powers, against the Rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickednesses in high places*, Eph. 6. 12. Christians have other Enemies to wrastle with, as the *World*, the *Flesh*, but their grand Enemy is *Satan*. He is the *Goliah*, who cometh forth and fighteth against them. This he doth by his *Temptations*. Of which there are divers kinds, some *Mediate*, others *Immediate*. *Mediate*, making use of *Instruments* to convey his Temptations. Thus he tempted our first parent *Adam* by his Consort *Eve*, making use of her to present the *Apple* unto him, Gen. 3. 6. And so he did our *Saviour*, making use of *Peter* to hand that Temptation un-

1. Satanical Injections.

to him, for the ſtopping of him in the courſe of his obedience, taking him off from his ſuffering work, that ſo he might have hindered mans ſalvation. Herein was *Peter* an inſtrument of *Satan*, ſet a work by him; upon which account our Saviour ſharply reprehending him for what he had done, calls him by his name, *Get thee behind me Satan*, Matth 16. 23. Or elſe preſenting *Objects* to their ſenſes, which may be taking to them. Thus was our firſt Parent *Eve* tempted by him, by preſenting unto her view the *Apple*, which ſhe looking on, and ſeeing that it was not onely *good for food*, but *pleaſant to the eyes*, *&c. ſhe took and eat of it*, Gen. 3. 6. And after the like manner he tempted our *Saviour* in the wilderneſs, by preſenting unto him a view of the world, *ſhewing him all the Kingdomes of it, and the glory of them*, Matth. 4. 8. And in the like way doth he ordinarily convey his Temptations, by preſenting unto men the *Pleaſures*, *Profits*, *Honours* of the world, All which are his *Snares*; as they are ſometimes called. *Let their table be made a Snare*, Rom. 11. 9. *They that will be rich* (ſeeking greedily after wealth) *fall into Temptation and a Snare*, 1 Tim. 6. 9. the *Devils ſnare* (as *Reproach* is called, 1 Tim. 3. 7.) But beſides theſe, he hath other Temptations, which are more *Immediate*, his ſecret ſuggeſtions, which are injected and caſt by him into the hearts of men. Upon which account they are called his *Darts*, Eph. 6. 16. *The fiery darts of the wicked*: τῦ πονηρῦ, *that wicked one*, *Satan*; whoſe Temptations are called *Darts*,

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in as much as they are injected, and cast at the souls of men, as Darts are at their Bodies, for the wounding and killing of them; And *fiery* or *burning*, πεπυρωμένα, because sticking in the soul, they burn inwardly, as poisoned darts do in the Body. Such *Darts* were those which the Devil cast at *Judas*; when first he tempted him to *betray his Master*, which was done by his instigation, as St. *John* sets it forth, Joh. 13. 2. *The Devil having put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simons son to betray him*; βεβληκότος, Injected, cast it into his heart. And afterwards to *destroy himself*. And such *Temptations* not onely *wicked men*, who being his *servants*, his *children* (as *Paul* calleth *Elimas*, *Thou child of the Devil*, Acts 13. 10. and our Saviour the malicious Jewes, *Ye are of your Father the Devil*, Joh. 8. 44.) are more under his power and command, their hearts being alwayes set open to him, but even the best of *Saints* are subject to. However he hath no such right to them, as he hath to others; *The Prince of this world cometh* (saith our Saviour) *and hath nothing in me*. Οὐκ ἔχει δὲν, *nihil juris habet*, *he hath no right to me*, yet by Gods permission, letting Satan loose upon them, they are subject to be exercised with these kind of Temptations; to have these *Darts* cast at them; to have such things presented to their fancies, as being dangerous to them, work great disquietment in them. Such are the Temptations of *Incredulity* and *Despair*, and Temptations of *Blasphemy*, which being so abhorrent to them as they are, so contrary not onely

to *Grace*, but *Nature*, may well be concluded to be *Diabolical Injections*. Such Temptations are Gods dear servants sometimes exercised with, which it may be, come upon them in so violent a way, that they know not how to resist them; but the more they strive against them, the more they are troubled with them; being like a *Ball*, which the more strongly it is cast against the wall, the more strongly it reboundeth back upon the face of him that threw it. So fareth it oft-times with these *Temptations*, the more earnestly they are resisted, the more violent they are. And being so, this must needs be a sad *Conflict*. So it was with this our Apostle, who is most probably conceived to have been exercised in some such kind. *The Messenger Satan*, (as the words in the Original may well be looked upon, Ἄγγελος Σατᾶν, *Angelus Satan*) the *Devil* being *Gods Messenger*, he was sent to *buffet him*, by divine permission being let loose upon him to assault him with some foul and dangerous temptation, with which he had a sore conflict, it being to him as a *thorne in his flesh*, causing great vexation and disquietment. And the like *Conflicts* have many of the dear Saints and servants of God been exercised with, sad *Conflicts*. But even in these the *grace* of God is sufficient for them. So the Lord here tells his servant *Paul*, *My grace is sufficient for thee*: Though he did not grant his *Request*, in giving him a *Quietus est*, freeing him from his trouble, by causing the evil Spirit to depart from him, yet he promiseth so to fortifie him by his grace against that wicked fiend,

that

that he ſhould not prevail againſt him, but that he ſhould ſo ſtand it out as to come off a Conquerer. And ſuch is the *ſufficiency of Divine grace*; that it is able to do the like for others. Though in themſelves weak and infirm creatures, no wayes able to wreſtle with this *Goliah*, yet through the aſſiſtance thereof inwardly ſtrengthening them, they ſhall be able to grapple with, and in the end come off, as *David* did triumphing over him. So much is intimated by our Apoſtle in that Text forecited, *Eph.6.16.* where directing Chriſtians concerning their ſpiritual warfare; he bids them among other things to make ſpecial uſe of the ſhield of faith. *Above all taking the ſhield of faith, wherewith ye ſhall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the Devil.* Such a fence is a good *ſhield* to a Soldier, let there be never ſo many darts caſt at him, this being held forth will ſecure him againſt them all. And this will *faith* do to a Chriſtian, being exerciſed aright, laying hold upon Chriſt, and fetching ſtrength from him, it will be as a *ſhield* to him, defending him againſt all temptations; ſo as though he may be aſſaulted and infeſted with them, yet he ſhall not be overcome by them.

But there are yet another ſort of Temptations, which are ſoarer then theſe; and theſe are *Divine Derelictions, Spiritual Deſertions*; when God ſeemeth to withdraw his aſſiſtance, hiding his face from the ſoul in theſe conflicts, ſeemingly leaving it to it ſelf. Of this Temptation our bleſſed Saviour himſelf had experience; whom

2. Divine Derelictions.

we may hear crying out upon the Croſs, *Eli, Eli, Lama-ſabacthani, My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me?* And the like had *David*, who was therein (as in many other things) a Type of Chriſt. Him alſo we hear complaining after the ſame manner, in the very ſame words, *Pſal.* 22. 1. *My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me? Why art thou ſo far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring?* And the like have many other of the dear Saints and Servants of God had, and frequently have. Now this cannot but be to them a *ſad Conflict*. When the *Sun* hideth its face, there muſt needs be darkneſs upon the earth: And ſo when *God* hideth his face, it muſt needs be ſad with the ſoul. So it was with *David*, *Thou didſt hide thy face*, (ſaith he) *and I was troubled*, Pſal. 30. 7. And ſo was it with our bleſſed *Saviour*, who upon this account tells his Diſciples, that *his ſoul was exceeding ſorrowfull, even unto death*, Mat. 26. 38. And upon the Croſs he complains more of this, than all other his torments. But as ſad as it is, yet ſuch is the ſufficiency of this grace, that it is able to ſupport and bear up the ſpirit under it. So it did our bleſſed *Saviour*, who in the midſt of that deſertion, was inwardly ſtrengthened and ſupported by the divine *Spirits* dwelling in him, ſo as though the ſenſe and feeling of his Fathers love for a time failed him, yet ſo did not his *faith*, which he manifeſted by calling him his God; *My God, my God.* And of like power is the ſame *ſpirit*, the *ſpirit* of *grace*; which dwelling in the hearts of true believers,

(though

(though not after the same manner that it did in Christ, in whom it dwelt (as the Apostle expresseth it, *Col.* 2. 9.) σωματικῶς, *Bodily*, that is, *Essentially*; yet truly and *Really* in regard of the vertue and operation of it) it is able in a secret way to support them whilst it doth not manifest it self unto them. Such a support it is that the Lord here maketh promise of to his servant *Paul*; though he seemed to hide his face from him in not hearkening to his prayer, not granting what he so earnestly desired, yet he giveth him to know that his *grace was sufficient* for him, and so should be *efficient* in him, for the upholding of him in that Conflict, and giving him a happy issue out of it. Such is the power of this *Grace*, that hereby a Christian may be enabled to *wrestle even with God* himself. So was *Jacob*, who *wrestled with the Angel*, (the Angel of the Covenant) and *prevailed* with him. Upon which account (as you heard) his name was changed from *Jacob* to *Israel*: *Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel, for as a Prince hast thou power with God, and with men, and hast prevailed*, Gen. 32. 28. A strange and incredible thing, that a poor *worm* (so *Jacob* is called, *Isa.* 41. 14.) should not only *strive* with his *Maker*, but *conquer* him: Yet this did *Jacob*: But how? not by any strength of his own, but by a divine assistance, the Lord himself upholding him in that conflict, and in the end, yielding to be overcome by him. Such is the sufficiency of this *grace*, that it is able thus to support the soul in whatever *Conflicts*, to

keep

keep it from *sinking*. Even as *Peter* was born up by the help of his Master, so as he came to him *walking upon the waves of the Sea*, Mat. 14. 29: Even so are believers by the power of divine grace and assistance, born up upon the waves of whatever *Temptations*, so as not to sink under them: However through the weakness of their faith they may begin to sink, (as *Peter* there did *v.* 30.) be in danger of perishing; yet Christ reaching forth his hand to them (as there he did to him) they shall be supported. And thus have I done with the first of these particulars, the first thing which *this grace* of God is sufficient to enable his people to, *viz.* to *wrestle with and resist Temptations*. Upon which I have insisted the longer, the Text leading me more directly to it than to the rest. Of which more briefly.

2. Work to subdue Corruption.

In the 2*d*. place, as this grace is sufficient to enable Christians to resist Temptations, so to *subdue Corruption*, the corruption of sinfull nature, the *Flesh*. This is one of a Christians *Enemies*, and that of all other the most dangerous; in as much as it is *within* him, lying in his own bosome, ready to betray him into the hands of those his other enemies, the *Divel*, and the *World*. These are Enemies *without*, the *Flesh* an Enemy *within*, which is ready to open the door to them, and to comply with them in letting in, and giving entertainment to their Temptations, without which, they could not take place, and become effectual. *Every man is tempted* (saith St. *James*) *when he is drawn aside of his own lust, and enticed*, Jam. 1. 14.

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Here is the ſource and original of all Temptation unto ſin, mans natural *Corruption*; without which, neither the *World* nor the *Devil* could hurt him, they tempting by working upon mans own *Concupiſcence*. Hence it was that the Devils fiery darts which he caſt at our bleſſed *Saviour* could do him no hurt, becauſe he found nothing in him. *The Prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me*, Joh. 14. 30. He did not find the like *tinder* of ſinfull *Concupiſcence* in him, as in others; ſo as thoſe ſparks could not take fire, his Temptations could take no place with him: upon this account there is no *Enemy* ſo dangerous as this, the *Fleſh*. And with this Enemy the beſt of Saints have many ſad and ſore conflicts. *Corruption* ſtill dwelling in them; though not *reigning* (as it doth in unregenerate perſons, who are *in the fleſh*, in their natural ſtate and condition, and nothing but *Fleſh*) yet ſtill it *dwelleth* in them, *It is no more I that do it, but ſin that dwelleth in me* (ſaith *Paul*) Rom. 7. 17, 20. Still there is a remainder of ſinfull Corruption in the beſt. And thus dwelling in them, it is continually *working* in them, and *warring* againſt them. So *Paul* found it in his own experience; *Regenerate Paul*; However he *delighted in the Law of God after the inward man*, (the *new-man*) (as he there ſaith) *v.* 22. Yet (ſaith he in the verſe following) *I ſee another Law in my members warring againſt the Law of my mind*. This did ſinfull Corruption, which was continually working in him; *oppoſing* and *hindring* him in the doing of what was good. *I find then a Law* (the

(the *Law of sin*) *that when I would do good, evil is present with me*, v. 21. *viz.* to stop and hinder him in what he desired and intended, and putting him upon what was evil. *The good which I would I do not, but the evil which I would not, that I do*, v. 19. Thus did the *Law in his members*, the Law of sin in his unregenerate part, *warr against the Law of his mind*, the Law of grace in his regenerate part. And the like experience have the best of Saints, in whom Corruption is continually working after the same manner; *hindring* them in the course of their obedience, being to them as a *weight*, or a *net*, as the Apostle compareth it, *Heb* 12. 1. *Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin that doth so easily beset us*, speaking (as some understand it) of Original Corruption, which lying heavy upon the soul, entangleth it, hindring it in its journey to Heaven. And hindring from what is good, it *instigateth* to what is evil. *The Spirit that is in us lusteth to envy* (saith St. *James*) cap. 4. 5. the *evil Spirit*, which still keepeth a residence in the best, inclineth them to that, and other the like sinfull Passions and Affections, which by the power of grace they resist. Thus have they continual Conflicts with this *Enemy*; which are to them *sore and sad Conflicts*. So they were to *Paul*; whom we may hear passionately crying out, *Rom.* 7. 24. *O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?* or, *this Body of death*, meaning that *Body of* [illegible] (as before he called it, *Cap.* 6. *v.* 6.) T[illegible] being still in him, it was to him like a *dead Bod*[illegible]

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tyed to a *living*, which by the ill ſavour of it maketh the man weary of his life: ſo was he, being wearied out with theſe continual conflicts. And what he had experience of, the like have all other of the ſervants of God, being exerciſed with the like conflicts betwixt the *fleſh* and *Spirit*. *The fleſh luſteth againſt the ſpirit, and the ſpirit againſt the fleſh, and theſe are contrary the one to the other, ſo that ye cannot do the things which ye would;*) ſo *Paul* telleth his *Galathians*) Gal. 5. 17. Such an unwearied Enemy is the *Fleſh* to them, which ſtriving ſo continually and ſo impetuouſly as it doth, they are not able of themſelves to ſtand out againſt it, but are ſubject to be worſted by it. So was *Paul*, who ſheweth how by that *Law in his members warring againſt the Law of his mind*, he was *brought into Captivity to the Law of ſin*, Rom. 7. 28. He was thereby, though againſt his will, drawn inevitably into ſin, to do the evil which he would not. And ſo fareth it with the beſt of Saints; the ſtouteſt Champions are ſubject to be foiled by this Enemy: And if ſo, how then ſhall poor weak Chriſtians be able to withſtand it? Yes, ſuch is the *ſufficiency of Divine grace*, that it is able to ſupport them in theſe conflicts, and to enable them to conquer and ſubdue this *Enemy*. Hereof that *choſen veſſel*, the bleſſed Apoſtle, had comfortable experience in himſelf, who after that compaſſionate complaint which he had made of that *body of death*, which ſo infeſted him, *Rom.* 7. 24. preſently breaks forth into an affectionate gratulation in the verſe following, *I thank God through*

through Jesus Christ our Lord; so blessing his God for what he had already begun to do for him, in freeing him from that dominion of sin under which sometimes he was, and for what he was further assured that he would do, in supporting him by his grace, so as he should stand out in this Conflict, and in the end come off a victorious conquerour over this his Enemy. And the like *sufficiency of grace* there is for all true believers; though *Corruption* in them be strong, strongly inclining them to some sinfull and inordinate lusts, yet by the power hereof they may be enabled to subdue them. It is that which the *Church*, among other things, comfortably assureth her self of, that God would do for her after he had converted her to himself, he would then subdue her iniquities, *Mich.* 7. 19. *He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us, he will subdue our iniquities.* Those sinfull lusts which formerly had tyrannized over them, should be brought into subjection to them. And this is Gods grace sufficient to do in and for his people, thus to subdue sinfull Corruption in them; enabling them to *bring* it under, and *keep* it under. Both these *Paul* telleth his *Corinthians* that he did to his *Body*, 1 Cor. 9. 27. *I keep under my Body, and bring it into subjection.* This did he, macerating his Body by labours, and fasting, denying himself some indifferent liberties, that so his Body might be in subjection to his Soul, and might be the more serviceable to his God; his flesh being by that means subdued to the obedience and discipline of the Spirit. And the like

are

are Christians by the Spirit of grace enabled to do to the *Body of sin* in them, to *bring* it under, and *keep* it under.

1. To *Bring it under*; Crucifying and mortifying it. *They that are Christs have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts*, Gal. 5. 24. So is it with true Believers; in whom the *Body of sin* is like the *Body* of a man fastned to the *Cross*, which though it be not quite dead, yet it is in a dying condition, not able to move and stir as before it did. Even so is it with the *Body of sin* in them, which (as the Apostle saith of it) is crucified with Christ: *Rom.* 6. 6. *Knowing this that our old man is crucified with him, that the Body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.* Like as Christ was crucified, fastned to the Cross, that so he might die by degrees; so is the *old man*, the *Body of sin* in a regenerate person; it is crucified with Christ, to whom he is made conformable in his death, that it might be destroyed; having already received a mortal wound, whereby it cometh to decay in the strength of it, so as it hath not any longer dominion over him. This is that which *Paul* giveth a comfortable assurance of to his believing *Romans*, v. 14. of that sixth Chapter, *Sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under the Law, but under grace.* Being, as they were, ὑπὸ χάριν, *under grace*, under the *Covenant* of grace, and under the *work* of grace; the Spirit of grace having begun the good work in them, they were freed from the dominion of sin, so as though it still dwelled, and

1. To bring it under.

and ſtired in them; yet by the ſame grace inabling them to reſiſt it, they ſhould be no longer ſervants unto it, but ſervants of righteouſneſs. So he there tells them, *v.* 18, *Being then made free from ſin, ye became the ſervants of righteouſneſs.* Free from ſin, as from the *Guilt*, ſo from the *Power* of it; ſin being in them, by the power of Grace ſubdued, *brought under.*

2. To keep it under.

2. And being brought under, by the ſame power it is *kept under*; ſo as it doth not break forth as otherwiſe it is inclined to do, and would do. *The Spirit that dwelleth in us* (ſaith St. *James* in that Text even now cited) *Luſteth to Envy, But God giveth more grace,* Jam. 4. 5, 6. Thus by the Spirit of Grace, that evil ſpirit, ſinfull Corruption, is kept under; ſo as by that means the ſervants of God are kept from thoſe ſins, which otherwiſe by nature and cuſtom they are very prone and inclinable to. Thus *David* tells us that he kept himſelf, *Pſal* 18. 23. *I was alſo upright before him* (before *God*) *and I kept my ſelf from mine iniquity.* Endeavouring to walk cloſely with God, he kept himſelf from that ſin to which he was by nature moſt inclined. But how did he thus? what, by his own ſtrength? Not ſo; being left to himſelf, he had ſad experience of his own weakneſs, as in the matter of *Bathſheba*; but by the ſtrength of his God, *I will love thee O Lord my ſtrength*, ſo he begins that Pſalm, *v.* 1. It is by the power of ſpecial grace, that Gods Saints are inabled thus to *ſubdue* their Corruptions, to *bring* them under, and keep them under. For both which this *grace is ſufficient.*

And

And so it is (in the Third place) to enable them to *perform Duties*; These a Christian of himself is not able to do. *Without me ye can do nothing*, (saith our *Saviour* to his *Disciples*) John. 15. 5. χωρὶς ἐμοῦ, *without me, seorsim a me* (as *Beza* renders it) being severed from me, not having Communion with me, without the assistance of my grace and spirit; of your selves, *Ye can do nothing*, οὐδὲν ποιεῖν οἷόν τε ἐστὶν, not any thing at all, any thing that is truly good, and well pleasing unto God. This men cannot of themselves so much as *will*, much less *do*. *To will is present with me* (saith *Paul*) *but how to perform that which is good I know not*, Rom. 7. 18. Regenerate persons, though their *hearts* be upright with God, their wills complying with his Will, so as they are desirous to do whatever it is that he requireth from them, yet their *hands* are weak, having no strength to act and perform what they desire. But for this also is the *grace of God sufficient*, sufficient to *strengthen their weak hands, and confirm their feeble knees*, (which the Prophet *Isaiah* calleth upon the Ministers of God to do to his people, by minding them of his Promises, and their own experiences, *Isai.* 35. 3.) to enable them to do whatever it is that he calleth them to, to perform the Duties both of their *General*, and *Particular callings*.

Work 3. To Perform Duties.

1. Of their *General Calling*, as *Christians*. To perform all duties of *Piety* and *Charity*; Piety towards *God*, Charity towards their *Neighbours*: so *working out their own salvation*, which *Paul* calleth upon his *Philippians* to do, *Phil.* 2. 13.

1. Of their General Calling.

Work out your own ſalvation with fear and trembling. To which he ſubjoins, *For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleaſure.* As though he had ſaid, Though you have no ſtrength of your own to do this, yet the grace of God is ſufficient to enable you to do it. Here is a Chriſtians *ſufficiency*, not in himſelf, but in *God*, who is *All-ſufficient*. *Not that we are ſufficient of our ſelves, to think any thing as of our ſelves; but our ſufficiency is of God*, (ſaith that Apoſtle, ſpeaking of himſelf) 2 *Cor.* 3. 5. It is God that worketh both the τὸ θέλειν & τὸ ἐνεργεῖν, to *will* and to *do*. And whilſt his grace doth the one, it can do the other; being alike ſufficient for both. Whilſt the Spirit of grace inclineth the heart to a loving and liking of Gods Commandments, it alſo ſtrengtheneth the foot to walk in them. This is that which the Lord promiſeth to do for his people, *Ezek.* 36. 27. *I will put my Spirit within you, and will cauſe you to walk in my ſtatutes, and ye ſhall keep my judgments, and do them.* Such is the *Covenant of grace*, the *Goſpel Covenant*, (not like that of the *Law*, the *Covenant of works*, which like an *Egyptian Task-maſter* requireth the tale of brick, whilſt it giveth no ſtraw to make them with, exacting a perfect obedience to what it requireth, but giving no ability to perform it) a *gracious Covenant*. What God requireth from thoſe who are under this Covenant, he enables them by his Grace and Spirit to yield an Evangelical obedience to; ſo cauſing his people to walk in his way. Yea, ſuch is the ſufficiency

of

of this grace, that be men never so weak in themselves, (as the best are) not able to stir or move, to set a foot in this way, yet it can enable them to run it. *I will run the way of thy Commandments, when thou shalt enlarge my heart* (saith *David*) Psal. 119. 32. Even as it is with a *Clock*, which being rusty or foul, it either moves not all, or very slowly; but being supplied with *oyle*, it runs glib: So doth the *Soul*; being anointed by this Spirit of grace, though dead and dull before, yet now it moveth vigorously, and goeth on cheerfully in the wayes of God, running after him. *Draw me, and we will run after thee*, (saith the *Church*) Cant. 1. 4. Thus are Gods children by the effectual work of his Grace in them, enabled to follow him in doing and performing the duties of their *general* Calling, as *Christians*.

2. And so of their *Particular* Callings; whether *Publick* or *Private*. Publick of *Magistracy*, or *Ministery*. The Lord having *anointed David with his holy oyl*, he saith, *his Arme should strengthen him*, Psal. 89. 20, 21. enabling him to go through with that service which he had called him to. And thus *Ezra* the *scribe* going about *Temple work*, the beautifying of the House of the Lord, *I was strengthened* (saith he) *as the hand of the Lord my God was upon me*, Ez. 7. 27, 28. by divine assistance carried on in his work, being inwardly strengthened and encouraged to go forward in that work which he was called to. And so *Paul* tells us of himself, how he went thorow with his Ministerial ser-

2. Of their Particular Calling.

vice: *Whereunto* (saith he) *I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily*, Col. 1. 29. And so the like may be said of *Private* Callings; being such as are lawfull, this Grace of God is sufficient to direct Christians how to demean and carry themselves in them, so as they may *therein abide with God*, (which *Paul* calleth upon them to do, 1 *Cor.* 7. 24.) walking in them uprightly, and sincerely, and unblameably, approving themselves to God and the world. But I shall not dilate upon this any further.

Work 4. To Endure Sufferings.

A fourth and last of these Particulars, to which Christians are by this divine grace strengthened, is the *enduring of Sufferings*: And for this also is this *grace sufficient*; as to carry them through the course of their *Active*, so their *Passive* obedience, enabling them, as to do, so to suffer, to endure *Sufferings*: which are of two sorts, *Humane*, or *Christian*; *Humane*, such as are alike common to men, as *men*. Πειρασμὸς ἀνθρώπινος (as the Apostle calleth them) 1 *Cor.* 10. 13. *There hath no temptation* (or *trial*) *taken you but such as is common to man. Christian, If any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed* (saith St. *Peter*) 1 Pet. 4 16. ὡς χριστιανός; that is, suffer for the sake of Christ. Now in both these is the grace of God sufficient to support those that are his, to enable them to endure these sufferings, and that with Patience and constancy. Of the former kind *David* had comfortable experience in himself; whom we may hear blessing God for it, *Psal.* 138. 3. *In the day*

day when I cryed thou answeredst me, and strengthnedst me with strength in my soul. And the like had *Paul* of the latter; who in the forecited Text, *Phil.* 4. 13. saith, that he was *able to do all things through Christ that strengthned him.* He was *able for all things*; as to *do*, so to *suffer* for Christ. That is the work which there he hath a special eye at, his *suffering work*. So much we may learn from the verses immediatly foregoing; where he setteth forth his sufferings for Christ, and with what Patience and holy contentation he bare them. *I have learned* (saith he) *in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be contented. I know both how to be abased, and how to abound*, &c. *v.* 11, 12. Thus was he enabled, as to do, so to suffer for Christ. But how? *Through Christ that strengthned* him. Ἐνδυναμοῦντί με Χριστῷ, Christ assisting of him by his grace. Which grace strengthning the Soul, what will it not be able to suffer? we see how it is with *leaden vessels*, though of themselves subject to melt, yet having water, or other liquor in them, they will endure the hottest furnace. Even so is it with the *souls of Saints*; though in themselves infirm and weak, yet having received some measure of this Spirit of Grace, what will they not suffer for Christ? So much the Apostle tells us of the *Saints* under the Old Testament, how that as by faith they *wrought righteousness*; so some of them *endured mockings, scourgings, rackings*, what not? we may see a List of the Particulars, *Heb.* 11. the latter end. These things also *Christians* through the assistance of

grace have been inabled to suffer; and bearing sufferings for Christ, they have done it not onely with *Patience*, but with *Joyfulness*. So did the believing *Hebrewes take the spoiling of their goods*, they *took it joyfully* (as the Apostle bears them record) Heb. 10. 34. And thus the *Apostles*, when having been imprisoned they were beaten, most uncivilly used, *they departed* (saith the Story) *from the presence of the Council, rejoycing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for the Name of Christ*, Acts 5. 41. And *Paul* in the verse after the Text sets forth how he *took pleasure in Infirmities, in Reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distress for Christs sake*. Now how were they inabled so to do? why through the assistance of divine grace. This being unto them (as *Paul* saith to his *Philippians*,) Cap. 1. v. 29. *Unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not onely to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake*. And they *being strengthened with all might, according to the glorious power of God unto all patience and long suffering with joyfulness*, (as he prayeth for his *Colossians* that they might be) Col. 1. 11. Whatever the sufferings of Gods children are, specially if sufferings for Christ, the grace of God is sufficient to support them under them. And thus you see how this *Grace* is sufficient to *Strengthen* the Believer, inabling him to that four-fold work; to *Resist Temptations*, to *Subdue Corruption*, to *Performe Duties*, to *Endure Sufferings*. Here is the 4th. Head.

Partic. 5. This Grace sufficient to Perfect the Believer.

To which add one more, of which briefly. As this grace is thus sufficient to *stablish* and *strengthen*

then the Believer ſo to *Perfect* him. This St. *Peter* joynes with the two former of theſe in that fore-cited Text, 1 *Pet.* 5. 10. Where he maketh this Apprecation for the Saints to whom he writeth. *The God of all grace, &c. make you perfect, eſtabliſh, ſtrengthen you.* And this the grace of God is ſufficient to do for all Believers, to make them *Perfect.* Such they are already as to their *Juſtification*; Being in Chriſt they are *perfect in him*; who (as the Apoſtle ſaith of him) hath *by one offering of himſelf for ever perfected them that are ſanctified*, Heb. 10. 14. made them perfect as to their *Juſtification.* Having paid a full price, and made a plenary ſatisfaction unto the Juſtice of God for all their ſins, he hath thereby freed them from the guilt of them, ſo as they ſtand as perfectly righteous in the ſight of God. And what he hath done by his *Merit* for their *Juſtification*, his *Spirit* is able to do the like for their *Sanctification*: To make them *Perfect*; and that both with Perfection of *Parts* and *Degrees.*

A twofold Perfection.

1. With *Perfection of Parts*, to ſanctifie them *wholly.* This is *Pauls* prayer for his *Theſſalonians*, 1 Theſ. 5. 23. *And the very God of peace ſanctifie you wholly.* Ὁλοτελεῖς; the whole man in every power and faculty of it. So the next words explain it; *And I pray God that your whole Spirit, Soul, and Body be preſented blameleſſe unto the coming of our Lord Jeſus.* Thus doth the Spirit of grace, like a ſweet perfume which ſpreadeth it ſelf through the whole room

1. Perfection of Parts.

where it is, into every corner of it, diffuses it self in the work of Sanctification through the whole man, through all the powers and faculties both of Soul and Body. And thus sanctifying them in every part it also furnisheth them with all *gifts and graces* requisite for them. So were the believing *Corinthians* qualified, to whom the Apostle giveth this Testimony, 1 Cor. 1. 4, 5. *I thank my God* (saith he) *alwayes on your behalf for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ, that in every thing ye are enriched by him, &c. So that ye come behind in no gift.* And thus furnishing them with all sorts of graces, it also maketh them *perfect in every good work*; which is that the Apostle prayeth for in the behalf of his believing *Hebrewes*, Cap. 13. v. 20. *Now the God of peace, &c. make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight.* Here is a Perfection of *parts*.

2. Perfection of Degrees.

2. Besides which there is a Perfection of *Degrees*, which again is two-fold; either *Comparative* or *Absolute*. *Comparative*, when a man attaineth a greater degree of Perfection then others have, or himself had. *Absolute*, that Celestial Perfection reserved for the Saints in heaven. And for both these is the *grace* of God *sufficient*.

For both these this Grace is sufficient.

To perfect Believers, by bringing them to some good *degree of perfection* here; building them up further. *And now Brethren I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up further* (it is *Pauls* farewel

to

to the *Elders* at *Miletum*) Acts. 20. 32. Ἐποικοδομῆσαι, *superstruere*, (as *Beza* renders it,) to build upon that foundation which is laid to increase the work of grace in you. This the *word of Gods grace* is able to do, the *Doctrine of the Gospel* being accompanied with the *spirit of grace*, it becometh effectual, as to begin the good work, so to carry it on to perfection. For this end it is that Christ hath ordained and appointed Ministers in his Church; as the Apostle tells us, Eph. 5. 11, 12, 13. *He gave some Apostles, and some Prophets, and some Evangelists, and some Pastors and Teachers, For the perfecting of the Saints, for the work of the Ministry, for the edifying the Body of Christ* (his Mystical Body, the Church) *till we all come in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.* This was Christs *designe*. And what he hath designed, he will see effected in all those which are given to him, to believe on him. Having begun *the good work*, the work of grace, in them, he will see it perfected. Such was *Pauls* confidence touching his believing *Phillipians. Being confident of this very thing that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ*, Phil. 1. 6. Till the day of his glorious appearing, at the general Judgement. At which time the Saints of God, appearing before him in their Souls and Bodies, shall be presented absolutely perfect, *Grace* being then swallowed up of *Glory*. Such is the *sufficiency* of this *grace*

of

of God, that it both can and will do for all that are under it whatever is requisite in order to their Salvation.

Application. And thus have I now done with the *Doctrinal* part of this *useful Truth.* This *useful Truth*; So it is in it self, and I wish that it may be so to every of us. Which that it may be, let the *Application* of it be directed two wayes. By way of *Consolation*, *Exhortation.*

Use 1. Consolation, a Soveraigne Cordial for drooping Spirits.

1. By way of *Consolation.* That is the *End* for which it is intended here in the Text. *Paul* being under some sad and sore *Conflict*, the Lord from heaven, who is *the God of Consolation* (as the *Apostle* calleth him, Rom. 15. 5.) administers to him this *Cordial*, reaching forth to him this *Grace-Cup* this *Cup of Salvation*, saying unto him, *My grace is sufficient for thee.* And of such use let it be unto us, as an *Aqua Cœlestis*, a *Soveraign Cordial*; serving to bear up our spirits in the midst of what ever *Conflicts.*

Proviso. See that we be under Grace.

Onely that it may not be misapplied (as *Cordials* sometimes are, being administred to those that are not fit to receive them) take we this *Proviso.* See that we be *Sons of Consolation.* Such a one *Joses* was in an *Active* sense, *who by the Apostles was sirnamed Barnabas, which is, being interpreted, The Son of Consolation*, Acts 4. 36. Υἱὸς παρακλήσεως, a *Comforter*, one who being a *Preacher*, had an excellent gift in comforting the afflicted minds of his hearers. And such see that we be in a *Passive* sense, such to whom Comfort, this Comfort belongeth. See that we be

be in the number of those that are *under Grace*. Under the *Covenant* of grace, and under the *work* of grace (as I before expounded that Phrase.)

1. Under the *Covenant of grace*. Not under the *Law*. *Ye are not under the Law, but under Grace* (saith *Paul* to his believing *Romans* in the Text before made use of) Rom. 6. 14. *Not under the Law*; under that Legal Covenant, the Covenant of works, which all unbelievers are; but *under Grace*, under the Gospel Covenant, the Covenant of Grace, which all that are in Christ Jesus, ingrafted unto him by faith, and so made members of his Mystical Body, are. See that we be of this number.

1. Under the Covenant.

2. And 2dly. *under Grace*, under the *work* of grace, such as have that Ἔργον ἀγαθὸν, that *good work* begun in us, the work of *Regeneration*; such whose hearts are turned from all sin unto God; such as have taken him to be our God, and given up our selves to his service, desiring in all things to approve our selves unto him, and to walk before him in all well-pleasing. Being such as are thus *led by the Spirit*, now we may be assured we are not *under the Law*; *If ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the Law*, Gal. 5. 18. But *under Grace*. And being thus qualified, now take we this *Cup of Consolation*, and drink of it, making use of this useful truth as we shall have occasion. In all our Straits, in all our Conflicts, hearing the Lord say unto us, what here he doth to his servant *Paul*. *My grace is sufficient for thee*. To descend into *Particulars*.

2. Under the work of Grace.

Being such, make use of this Cordial in all Conflicts.

1. Is

Against fear of falling into sin.

1. Is it so, that we being sensible of our own weakness, do fear our *standing*, our continuing in the state of grace whereinto we are called; being of our selves subject to fall, to fall into sin through the infirmity of our flesh, yet here remember this *Consolation*, the grace of God, by whose *power we are kept through faith unto salvation* (as St. *Peter* mindeth us of it, 1 *Pet.* 1. 5.) is sufficient for us. Sufficient to *establish* us, to make us stand. He is *able to keep us from falling*, Jude 24. which, whilst we lean upon him by faith, and endeavour to approve our selves to him, he will do. *He shall be holden up* (saith *Paul* speaking of the *weak Brother*) *for God is able to make him stand*, Rom. 14. 4. Thus is this Grace sufficient to keep us from particular fallings.

2.
Against fear of falling totally.

2. However (in the second place) though we may be left to the sad experience of our own weakness, to stumble and fall into some particular sin, or sins; yet remember that this grace is sufficient to keep us *in falling*, to keep us from a total defection, from falling away totally. And this, so long as we make a right use of this *grace*, cooperating with it, and being subservient to it, in endeavouring to do what it directeth us to, it will do. *If ye do these things* (saith St. *Peter* to Believers) *ye shall never fall*, 2 Pet. 1. 10. *These things*, viz. that which he had minded them of in the words foregoing; *Giving diligence in making their calling and election sure*, to get assurance of their salvation, which is done by continuance in well doing. *So doing* (saith he)

ye

ye shall never fall, Οὐ μὴ πταίσητέ ποτε, *Nunquam impingetis,* Ye shall *never stumble,* ye shall go on smoothly in your way to heaven, without falling into sin; However, not so fall as to lose the prize, not fall away totally from the grace of God, not so fall as to be utterly cast down. *The steps of a good man* (saith *David*) *are ordered* (or, *established*) *by the Lord, and he delighteth in his way. Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down, for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand,* Psal. 37. 23, 24. Such is the stability of the *Citizens of Zion* (as *David* setteth it forth *Psal.* 15.) the true and faithfull servants of God, such as desire and endeavour to walk closely with him, *walking uprightly, and working righteousness,* (as he describeth them, *v.* 2.) having a respect to all Gods Commandments, as well those of the *second Table,* as of the *first,* to do their duty to *God,* and their *Neighbour*; of such a one (saith he *v.* last) *He that doth these things shall never be moved*; that is, never be *removed,* cast out of that state into which by grace he is entred. He shall *abide in Gods Tabernacle, and dwell in his holy hill,* (as the first Verse there hath it) being a true member of Christs Church, he shall never be cast out from having communion with it, here, or hereafter.

Reply. I, but (saith a poor soul) I am already fallen, and that foully and fearfully; fallen into some great, hainous and horrid sin, which hath wounded my Conscience, weakned and wasted my strength and comfort, so as I do not, I cannot, walk in the wayes of God as sometimes

Comfort to a Lapsed sinner.

I did. My sin *lyeth heavy upon me*, and is *ever before me*, so as I can have no peace, no rest or quiet, but am ready to sink, and to be swallowed up of the gulph of desperation. What is there any hope, any crum of Comfort for me?

Ans. Yes, thy soul being truly humbled within thee, now despair not, but hear God saying this unto thee, *My grace is sufficient for thee*. Sufficient, as to *pardon* thy *sin*, so to *heal* thy *soul*, to raise thee up, and set thee upon thy feet again, to restore thee to thy former health and comfort. This it did (as we heard) for *David*, and *Peter*, whose sins are as great as thine. And why not for thee?

Comfort against Relapses.

Repl. I, but I have *fallen again and again*, having had experience of the power of this restoring grace I have relapsed; I have *with the Dog returned to my vomit, and with the Sow that was washed to the wallowing in the mire*: What is there any hope, any help for me?

Ans. To this I have (as I remember) returned Answer before; shewing you how this case is dangerous, yet not desperate. To which let me add a word more. Such relapses into gross and scandalous sins, are not ordinarily to be found in persons truly Regenerate. *David* committed *Adultery* but once; and *Peter*, though he denied his Master thrice, yet it was at one and the same time, whilst he was under the same Temptation. His falling being like that of a man falling down a pair of stairs, who falls three steps one after another before he can recover himself; all which is but one fall. As for gross sins in a sanctified

person

perſon, they are like ſome diſeaſes in the Body, (as the *Quartan Ague*) which being once perfectly cured, ſeldome return again. But ſuppoſing this to be thy caſe, yet deſpair not, hearing God to ſay this unto thee; *My grace is ſufficient for thee.* Provided that there be the like *Repentance* in thee as was in *David* and *Peter*, and then doubt not of finding the like *grace* exerciſed upon thee as was upon them. He that requireth it of thee, that *If thy Brother treſpaſs againſt thee ſeven times in a day, and ſeven times in a day turn again unto thee, ſaying I repent, thou ſhalt forgive him*; (which our Saviour doth, *Luk.* 17. 3.) will not be wanting in the exerciſe of the like grace towards thee, as in pardoning, ſo in healing thy reiterated tranſgreſſions. Only ſee that thy repentance be true and ſincere. And then remember the *Caveat* which I gave before; Take heed of abuſing this Grace, by making it an occaſion of ſin: But (as our Saviour ſaid to the impotent man, whom he had cured of a long continued infirmity, *Joh.* 5. 14.) *Go thy way and ſin no more, leſt a worſe thing come unto thee.*

3. To proceed, (in the third place) Are we *led into Temptation*, exerciſed therewith; of what kind ſoever it be, yet give not way to deſpondency; but ſtill remember this *Conſolation*, hearing God ſay unto us, what here he doth to his ſervant *Paul* in the like condition; *My grace is ſufficient for thee.* Which make we uſe of in the midſt of theſe Conflicts, for the ſupporting and bearing up our ſpirits in wraſtling with theſe Temptations,

3. Comfort in Temptations.

Temptations, whatever they be; whether *Outward*, or *Inward*.

I. Outward; whether Deterring.

1. For *Outward Temptations*, such as we meet withal in and from the *world*, be they *Deterring* or *Alluring*, yet fear them not: I mean with a distrustfull, distractfull fear. Fear them we may, nay we ought, specially the latter of these, which are of the two the most dangerous; *Happy is the man that feareth alwayes* (saith the *Wiseman*) Prov. 28. 14. that fearing *God* with a fear of Reverence; feareth *himself* being conscious of his own weakness, and so feareth all his *spiritual Enemies*, lest he should be overcome or hurt by them. Thus a Christian may and ought (among other) to fear the *world*, to be afraid of the *Temptations* of it: But not with a diffident, distrustfull and distractfull fear. Thus fear not *Deterring Temptations*. Of these we must make account to meet with many, much opposition from the men of the world. *Because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you*, (saith our Saviour to his Disciples) *Joh.* 15. 19. So it is, there being an *Antipathy* betwixt these two *spirits*, that which is in the world, and that which is in those that are called out of it, the Spirit of *God*, which is a *holy* Spirit, and the spirit of *Satan*, which is a *wicked* spirit; those in whom this *wicked spirit* dwelleth and ruleth, (as it doth in the men of the world, wicked and ungodly men) they do naturally hate those in whom the *spirit of God* dwelleth and worketh, being visible in the graces of it. And hating them, they will be ready as

as occasion is to express their hatred, both by word and deed, being unto them *as thorns in their flesh*, as the *messengers of Satan to buffet them*, so seeking to stop or hinder them in their course; discouraging and disheartning them what they can. But let not Gods servants give way to those Temptations. Be we not terrified by them. *Only let our Conversation be such as becometh the Gospel of Christ*: And then (as *Paul* encourageth his *Philippians*, cap. 1. v. 27, 28.) *In nothing be terrified by these our Adversaries, Fear not their fear, neither be afraid*, (as the Prophet *Isaiah* hath it) *Isa.* 8. 12. But bear up head and heart against all their menaces; knowing that the grace of God is sufficient to support and bear up our spirits under these discouragements, and to carry us on in our course. Even as we see how a good gale of *wind* carrieth a small Vessel at Sea against the strongest *tide*, so as it not only beareth up head against it, but maketh way through it; so is the *Spirit of God* (which is compared to a *wind*, as you heard *Joh.* 3. 8.) able to bear up our Spirits against whatever opposition we may meet withall in and from the world.

And so it is to keep us from the *Allurements* of it; which (as I said) are more dangerous then the former. Yet this is the *sufficiency of this Grace*, that it is able to keep us in the midst of these *Temptations* so as we shall not be ensnared by them; not so taken with the *Profits*, *Pleasures*, *Honours* of the world, as to have our hearts inordinately set upon them. Of this

Or Alluring.

ſufficiency others of the Saints of God have had a gracious experience. So had *Moſes*, who living in *Pharaohs Court* yet was not taken with what he there ſaw. Not with the *Honours* and *Promotions* which were tendred to him. *When he was come to years*, (years of diſcretion, ſo as he was capable of preferment) *he refuſed to be called the ſon of Pharaohs daughter*, Heb. 11.24. To be her *adopted Son*; the higheſt promotion that that Kingdom could afford, and a fair ſtep to the Crown, which very probably in that way he might have obtained; yet he ſlighted the offer. And ſo for the *Pleaſures* which he might there have enjoyed, he ſlighted them. *Chuſing rather to ſuffer affliction with the people of God, then to enjoy the pleaſures of ſin* (or *ſinfull pleaſures*) *for a ſeaſon*, (ſo it followeth) *v.* 25. And the like for the *Profits*, (as the next verſe hath it) *Eſteeming the reproach of Chriſt greater riches then the treaſures of Egypt*, v. 26. Thus was he weaned from the world, not being taken with any of theſe Temptations. And how came he ſo to be? Not out of a *ſtoïcal Apathy*, or *Antipathy*, any natural diſlike that he had of theſe things, but from a *ſupernatural Principle*, the work of *grace* in him; *By faith Moſes*, &c. *v.* 24. And the like work the ſame *grace* of God had in and upon this our Apoſtle, who tells his *Galathians* what little affection he had to the world, or any thing in it, *Gal.* 6. 14. *The world is crucified to me, and I unto the world.* The *Profits*, *Pleaſures*, *Honours* of the world, which the men of the world ſo much dote upon; they were

were no more to him then a dead thing, then a crucified Body is to the Spectators, which dying ſo ignominious a death is ſcorned by them (as our Saviour was by the Jewes) neither could they any more move or ſtir him, then ſenſual objects can move or affect a dying man. And how came *Paul* to be thus diſaffected to the world? Why, it was onely by the power of Chriſt working in him, as he there ſets it forth; *By whom the world is crucified to me*, &c. Having a ſpiritual union and communion with Chriſt, he had this vertue derived from him, whereby he became thus mortified in his affections. Now what this grace of God hath done for them, and many others, it is able to do the like for us. Having called us out of the world it is able to keep us in it, inabling us ſo to reſiſt the Temptations of it, as that we ſhall not be overcome by them.

2. And as for *Outward*, ſo for *Inward* Temptations. Is it ſo, that we are exerciſed with theſe Conflicts in our Souls, aſſaulted by *Satanical Injections*, having theſe *fiery darts* caſt into our boſomes, and ſticking there, ſo as we can have no quiet, no reſt? yet be not diſcouraged. As this is no other then what the deareſt Saints of God (ſome of them) have had experience of, ſo that grace which hath ſupported them, is able to do the like for us. This (as you have heard) is conceived to have been *Pauls* caſe here. He was thus *buffetted*; yet the Lord willeth him to reſt contented, giving him to know that his *grace was ſufficient* for him. And ſo it is for us, ſufficient to ſupport and ſtrengthen us in this Combate,

Inward Temptations.

Satanical Injections.

and in the end to give us the victory over this our grand Enemy. *The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly*, Rom. 16. 20.

Divine Desertions.

Repl. I but (saith the poor drooping soul) I have a greater enemy to deal with then *Satan*, even *God* himself; who not onely hideth his face from me, but fighteth against me. As he is said to have done against his people *Israel*, Isa. 63. 8, 9, 10. Having owned them for his people, and being a tender and compassionate Saviour to them, sympathizing with them, *In all their afflictions he was afflicted, and the Angel of his presence saved them; In his love and in his pity he redeemed them, and he bare them, and carried them all the dayes of old*, v. 9. Such had his affection been to them. But they being changed, so was he; They *rebelling*, and *vexing his holy Spirit*, *He was turned to be their Enemy, and he fought against them*, v. 10. Even so fareth it with me. Time was when I had gracious experience of Gods love and favour to me, when his face shone upon me, and I walked in the light of his countenance, but I having offended and provoked him by my sins, he hath now turned away his face from me; nay he is turned to be mine Enemy, fighting against me, as by outward judgments, so by inward horrors and terrors, wherewith my soul is filled.

Of all Conflicts this the sorest.

Ans. A sad condition; yet despair not. Of all *Conflicts* none like unto this, yet faint not under it; but still hear thy God saying unto thee, *My grace is sufficient for thee.* So it was for his servant *Job*, whom we may hear passionately com-

complaining to his friends, Job. 6. 4. *The arrows of the Almighty are within me, the poyson whereof drinketh up my Spirit; The terrours of God do set themselves in array against me, &c.* God did not onely visit and afflict him *outwardly*, in his estate, his children, his body, but *inwardly* in his soul, filling it with horrors and terrors, yet was Gods grace sufficient for him, to support him in this conflict, and to give him a comfortable issue out of it. *Ye have heard of the patience of Job* (saith St. *James*) *and have seen the end of the Lord* (what end he made with him,) *that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy*, Jam. 5. 11. So the Lord was to him; however he *wrote bitter things against him* (as elsewhere he complaineth, Job 13. 26.) *making him to possess the iniquities of his youth*; bringing his former sins committed in his age of ignorance and imprudence to his remembrance, setting them in order before him to his great horror and terror, yet he was to him *very pitiful and of tender mercy*, πολύσπλαγχνος, *of many Bowels* (as that word properly signifieth) which were as it were moved within him, as the Bowels of a tender Mother are, when she seeth her dear child in some extremity of pain. So was the Lord affected towards his servant *Job*, having compassion towards him; which in due time he manifested unto him by giving him a comfortable issue out of that Temptation. Thus then though there may be nothing but frownes without, yet still there are Bowels of Compassion within towards all those who are Gods children by Adoption and

Grace. So the Lord himself tells his *Israel*, Isa. 31. 20. *Is Ephraim my dear Son, is he a pleasant child? For since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still; Therefore my bowels are troubled for him, I will surely have mercy upon him, saith the Lord.* Such Bowels of tender pity and compassion hath the God of all grace towards all his adopted children, such as are *under grace*; which in due time will break forth in the exercise of his grace and mercy upon them. In the mean time whilest he thinketh fitting to hold them under this saddest conflict, his grace is sufficient to uphold them, yea so to inable them to wrastle with him (as *Jacob* did) that they may prevail with him.

Thus then you see how useful this *Soveraigne Cordial* may be, and in its self is, for the bearing up of drooping spirits under whatever *Temptations*, whether *Outward*, or *Inward*. Which use let all that can make this out, that they are (as I said) *under grace*, make of it.

4. Comfort against sinful Corruption.

4. O, but (saith the poor soul) I have a *viper*, a *scorpion* in my bosome, an enemy *within* me, the *flesh*, my own sinful *Corruption*, which strongly enclineth me to many sinful and inordinate lusts. And I fear I shall find it a *Dalilah*, doing the like to me, that she did to her *Sampson*, betraying me into the hands of the *Philistims*, those other enemies of mine, *Satan* and the *World*. A dangerous enemy indeed (as I have shown you) and I wish that men were more jealous of it then generally they are, that so they might not *sleep*, as *Sampson* did, by their security

ſecurity betraying themſelves. In the mean time be not diſcouraged by it, ſo as to leave off wreſtling with it. So long as the *Law in thy minde* maketh reſiſtance againſt this *Law in thy members*, going forth againſt it not in thine own ſtrength, but in the ſtrength of God, doubt not of good ſucceſſe in the end. The *grace of God*, that grace which worketh in thee, is ſufficient to ſupport and ſtrengthen thee, ſo as though thou mayeſt ſometimes be foiled and worſted by it, yet in the end thou ſhalt come off a Conquerour. So did this our Champion *Paul* (as I have ſhewed you) though he had continual conflicts with this enemy, and was ſometimes foiled by it, being (as he ſaith) *brought into captivity to the Law of ſin which was in his members*, Rom. 7. 23. yet through the aſſiſtance of grace he obtained the victory over it, for which he bleſſeth his God, v. 25. So ſhalt thou, going forth in the ſtrength of this grace, and relying upon it, (to which I ſhall direct anon) thou ſhalt find it ſufficient to *ſubdue Corruption*, to *bring* it under, and *keep* it under.

5. Comfort againſt inability to performe duties.

I but in the mean time (ſaith the conflicting ſoul) *I want ſtrength to perform* that which I ought, to perform duties to God and man, the duties of my general and particular calling. Theſe are a burden to me, under which I go heavily.

Anſ. Yet ſink not under it. Though thou findeſt no ſtrength in thy ſelf to perform what thou oughteſt (which as I ſhewed you, was *Pauls* caſe) yet faint not under this Burden, which by the grace of God is made light. *My yoke is*

ſie, and my burden is light (ſaith our Saviour) Mat. 11. *ult.* So it is to a regenerate ſoul, where the will conſenteth to the Law of God, now his *Commandements are not grievous*; which (as St. *John* ſaith of it) is the work of Gods grace. *This is the love of God, that we keep his Commandements, and his Commandements are not grievous*, 1 Joh. 5. 3. the ſpirit of grace giving both will and power to do them; inabling the believer to yield; though not a *Legal*, yet an *Evangelical* obedience to the Law of God, ſuch as ſhall find acceptance with him, and receive the recompence of reward from him.

6. Or to endure Sufferings.

O but how ſhall I be able to *endure ſufferings*? Theſe already are neither few nor ſmall; and I know not what they may be; They may be many and great, and how ſhall I be able to go thorow with this *ſuffering work*? Alas I am ready to ſink under ſome light afflictions, I know not how to bear them. What ſhall I then do, if God call me to greater ſufferings, to *reſiſt unto blood*, to lay down my life for Chriſt? Why, let not the thought hereof be a trouble to thy ſoul, remembring what the Apoſtle tells believers, 1 Cor. 10. 13. *God is faithful, who will not ſuffer you to be tempted above that you are able, but will with the temptation alſo make a way to eſcape, that ye may be able to bear it.* For this his grace is ſufficient. That power which ſupported the Lord *Jeſus* under his *Satisfactory*, is able to do the like for thee under thy *Caſtigatory*, or *Probational* ſufferings. And therefore reſt contented with it, quietly ſubmitting to what ever diſpenſations providence ſhall pleaſe to meaſure

sure out unto thee; being comfortably assured of the assistance of this grace, which shall support thee under them, and carry thee thorow them.

7. Against weakness of Grace.

Q. but my *Grace is weak*. Such is my *faith*, such is my *Patience*, and such are all other Graces in me. I have no competent stock to trade with, or live upon. Let this be granted, yet the *grace of God is sufficient for thee*, to make a supply to this thy want. *He that hath begun the good work* in thee *is able to perfect it*; to give thee such a portion of grace as shall be *requisite* or *expedient* for thee. Requisite for thy *Salvation*, and expedient for thy *condition*. It was the case of that poor *widdow of Zaraphath* (or *Sarepta*) of whom we read, 1 King. 17. She had but a *handful of meal, and a little oyl in a cruise*, to maintain her self and her Son. But what saith the *Prophet* to her when she made this complaint to him? You may read it, v. 13. *And Eliah said unto her, Fear not, &c. For thus saith the Lord God of Israel, the barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruise of oil fail, until the day that the Lord sendeth rain upon the earth.* Which accordingly came to pass, as the verses following set it forth, v. 15, 16. Thus did that little by a special providence afford sufficient food for her and hers. And doubt not but the grace of God is able to do the like for thee. Onely do thou as she did; imploy that little stock of *grace* which thou hast for *God*, as she did her *handful of meal* in making a *Cake for Eliah*. And then doubt not but he both can and will make the like supply to thee. *His grace is sufficient* for thee to make

thee

thee grow and increase in grace. We see what a *general providence* doth for *Herbs* and *Plants*, making them to grow up, some of them from a small seed to a tall tree. So our Saviour observeth it of the *grain of Mustard seed*, Matth. 13. 31. how that *being the least of all seeds* (one of the least) yet *it groweth up to be the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so as the birds of the aire come and lodge in the Branches thereof*, (so it seemeth it did in that Country of *Palestine*, growing higher and larger there then elsewhere.) And is not the *special grace* of God able to do the like for his Elect people? Having sown the seed of his sanctifying grace in their hearts, though it be at the first but like that *grain*, very small and inconsiderable; yet he is able to make it grow and increase until it come to perfection. And let all who are *under grace* (still I strike upon that string, as being that which every one who would lay hold of the Comfort here held forth, must labour to get some clear and comfortable evidence of) be comfortably assured, that whilest they wait upon him in the use of means, he will do for them. They being *like trees planted by the rivers of water* (as the Psalmist compareth the godly man, Psal. 1. 3.) being watered by the continual influences of divine grace, they shall grow and flourish. Onely (as I hinted it before, and shall touch upon it again hereafter) be not wanting in the use of means, nor in the improving that little which thou hast. We see how by an ordinary Providence *good Husbands* beginning with a small stock grow up to great estates. And

by

by the same means may a poor soul come (through the blessing of God, the concurrence of his grace with its endeavours) to increase in his spiritual estate, so as to grow rich in grace. *I know thy works and thy tribulations, and poverty, but thou art rich* (saith the Lord *Jesus* to the Church of *Smyrna*) Rev. 2. 9. And this it may comfortably hope and look for, having Christs own promise for it; *Unto every one that hath, shall be given, and he shall have abundance*, Matth. 25. 29. That good and faithful servant, who by his diligence had doubled his *Talents*, by trading with them, of *five* making them *ten*, he had another *Talent* given him, which was taken from him who had *hid it in a napkin* (as we there find it in the verse fore-going.) Thus whilest Christians indeavour what they can to make improvement of that grace which they have received, let them not doubt of having a gracious supply made to them, so as they shall *increase with the increase of God*, until they *come to be perfect men in Christ Jesus*.

Thus then you see how *Soveraign a Cordial* this is, how this *Sufficiency of divine grace* may serve to meet with all Objections that a *drooping Spirit* may make, and so to bear it up under the saddest and sorest Conflicts.

What then remaines, but that all of us *come unto God for this Grace*. Let that be the first word of *Exhortation*. Come we unto God (I say) that we may be made partakers of this grace. Taking notice that it is *his grace*, *My grace* (saith the Text.) He it is that is *the God of all grace*

Use 2, Exhortation. 1. Come unto God for Grace.

grace (as St. *Peter* calls him) 1 Per. 5. 10. whatever grace it is that we want come unto him for it, for the beginning, for the increasing of it. *Lord increase our faith* (say the Apostles to their Lord and Master) Luke 17. 5.

Direction. Onely (for a word of *Direction*) that we may be sure to speed in our requests, and obtain what we come for, see

1. Bring empty vessels. 1. That we *bring empty vessels* with us. That is the Direction which the Prophet *Elisha* giveth to that poor *Widow* (of whom we read 2 King. 4. when he intended the multiplying and increasing of that *little oyl* which she had, he biddeth her go *borrow, and bring empty vessels* to him, v. 3. which she doing, *they were filled* (as we find it in the sequel) v. 6. And the like do we, Having but a small stock of grace, and having great use of it (as she had of her pot of oyle, which was all that she had to live upon, and to pay her husbands debts with, which were required from her) come we unto God after the like manner, bringing with us *empty vessels*, hungry, and humble souls. Such, and onely such, they are that can look for a supply of grace from God. *He hath filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he hath sent empty away* (saith *Mary* in her *Magnificat*) Luke 1. 53. *God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble* (saith St. *James* and St. *Peter*) Jam. 4. 6. 1 Pet. 5. 5.

2. Come in the name of Christ. 2. Thus coming, come we *in the name of Christ*. *Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it unto you* (that is the Assurance which our Saviour giveth to his Disciples)

ciples) *Joh.* 16. 23. *Ὅσα, whatsoever*, if good in it self, and good for you. Such is *grace* (we are sure:) which is by St. *Paul* often called *the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ*, as upon other acounts, so upon this; in as much, as it was merited, so it is conveyed by and through him (as before you heard.) Come we unto God then with him in our *Armes*, the armes of our faith, laying hold upon him as our alone *Mediator* and *Advocate*, who having (as I said) merited this grace for us by his *Passion*, is now impetrating it for us by his *Intercession*.

3. And thus coming, now let us come with a *holy boldness* and *confidence*. That is the Apostles direction, *Heb.* 4. last. *Seeing then that we have a great high Priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God*, &c. *Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in the time of need.* Thus, being *under grace*, beg we a further supply of grace with a holy confidence. *Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Christ*, Phil. 1. 6. Not doubting. So our Apostle directeth Christians to pray, 1 *Tim.* 2. 8. *I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath or doubting.* Two things there are (as *Grotius* well notes upon that Text) which do after a special manner render a mans prayers unacceptable unto God; the one is *Odium adversus fratrem*, hatred which he beareth to his Brother, which is there called *wrath*, in as much as *hatred* (saith he) is

3. Come with holy confidence.

is but *Ira inveterata*, inveterate anger; the other is *dubitans*; *Dubitatio de Dei promissis*, doubting of the Promises of God. This take we heed of, let not our prayers in praying for grace be leavened with this leaven. Here pray without *doubting*. In other things Christians may have some cause to doubt, not knowing whether that which they ask be according to the Will of God, or no. But as for *grace*, that we are sure of that it is so. And therefore here pray with humble and holy confidence. *This is the Confidence that we have in him, (in Christ) that if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us* (saith St. *John*) 1 Joh. 5. 14. *He heareth us*, and that so as he will give what we ask. So the next verse expounds it; *And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the Petitions that we desired of him*, v. 15. that is, we shall have them granted, and that as surely as if we were already possessed of the things we pray for.

4. Take heed of obstructing this Grace.

4. Only (in the last place) take heed of *obstructing* this Grace: which may be two wayes; by *grieving the Spirit*, and by *neglecting of means*. Take we heed of being guilty of either.

1. By grieving the Spirit.

1. *Of grieving the Spirit. Grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby you are sealed unto the day of Redemption*, Eph. 4. 30. πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον, the *holy Spirit*, the sanctifying Spirit of God, which having begun this work of grace, is to perfect it; take heed of grieving, of sading it. The heart being grieved, sadded, it doth not send forth and communicate the vital spirits so freely, so strongly as otherwise it would. The grieving of the

the Spirit obſtructs and hinders the influence of of grace. *Q.* But when is the *Spirit grieved?* *Anſ.* When the *motions of it are ſlighted*, not regarded, the counſels of it not hearkned to. To ſhut the door againſt a friend that cometh to give one a viſit, cannot but grieve him. And ſo to ſhut the door of the ſoul againſt the *Spirit of grace*, when it ſtandeth and knocketh there, cannot but be a ſadding to it. And much more when any thing is done againſt that light which is ſet up in the Conſcience by the Spirit. As ever we would have the *Spirit of grace* act and work rigorouſly and efficatiouſly in us, ſupporting and aſſiſting, ſtrengthening and comforting us, take heed of this *grieving* it.

2. Take heed of *neglecting means*, the means of grace. It is in and by them that the *Spirit breatheth*, through which, it conveyeth this grace; even as the *Heart* conveyeth the *vital ſpirits* through the *Arteries*, ſo doth the *Spirit* convey *grace* through *Ordinances*. And therefore ſee that with care and conſcience we attend upon them: In ſpecial upon the *Miniſtery of the Word*. Which (as you have heard) is therefore called *the word of Gods grace*, Act. 20. 32. *And now Brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace*, (ſaith *Paul* to the *Elders* and *Brethren* at *Miletum*,) Τῷ λόγῳ τῆς χάριτος αὐτοῦ; The Miniſtery of the Goſpel, which having been the means of their firſt *Converſion*, it was likewiſe to be the means of their further *Edification, to build them up, and to give them an inheritance among them that are ſanctified.* (as it there fol-

2. By neglecting of Means.

followeth). Upon this account then be we diligent in attending upon this *Ordinance*: Not neglecting that other, where it may be enjoyed according to Christs Institution, the *Sacrament of the Lords Supper*, which was ordeined and appointed for this very end, for the confirming and increasing of *the good work*, the work of grace, where it is begun. Thus seek we unto God for this Grace.

2. Make a right use of this Grace.

And thus seeking to him for it, now *make we a right use* of it. *Standing*, *living*, *walking* by it.

1. Standing by it.

1. *Standing* by it. Not upon our own feet, not trusting to our own strength. Which who so doth (as you have heard) must make account to fall. Of which we have a sad instance in *Peter* (which I touched before.) But in the strength of *divine grace*, which only is able to make us stand, to stablish us and keep us from falling.

2. Living by it.

2. Standing by it, *Live by it. The just shall live by his faith* (saith the Prophet) *Heb.* 2. 4. (cited by the Apostle) *Heb.* 10. 38. Faith in God, trusting and relying upon his grace, Let this be the *Anchor* of our Souls to ride by in all storms and tempest, making use of this in all estates and conditions, to buoye and bear up our drooping spirits in the midst of whatever Conflicts. In all *Temptations* and *Tryals*, of what kind soever they be, let this support us, the *sufficiency of Gods grace*; trusting perfectly in him who is *the God of all grace*. *What time I am afraid* (saith *David*) *I will trust in thee*, Psal. 56. 3.

which

which whilſt he did, he was comfortably aſſured that he ſhould find a ſupply of ſtrength from him for the ſupporting of him, of which he had had former experience. *I had fainted* (ſaith he) *unleſs I had believed to ſee the goodneſs of the Lord in the land of the living. Wait on the Lord, be of good courage, and he ſhall ſtrengthen thy heart,* Pſal. 27. 13, 14. The like do we; (I ſpeak it to Believers, ſuch as have God for their God) *Be of good courage, and he ſhall ſtrengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the Lord,* Pſal. 31. laſt.

3. And thus ſtanding and living, now *walk* by it, going forth in the ſtrength of this *grace.* Thus go we forth againſt our *ſpiritual Enemies,* the *Devel,* the *World,* and the *Fleſh.* Not in our own ſtrength. Great *Goliah* thus coming forth againſt little *David* in his own ſtrength, fell before him. And no better ſucceſs muſt they look for, who ſhall go forth in the like manner againſt theſe their ſpiritual Enemies. And therefore go we out againſt them in the Name of the Lord. So did *David* againſt that *Goliah,* as he giveth him to know it, 1 *Sam.* 17. 45. *Thou comeſt to me with a ſword, and with a ſpeare, and with a ſhield;* (armed with weapons offenſive and defenſive, wherein he placed his confidence) *But I come to thee in the Name of the Lord of hoſts.* And ſo went he out againſt the reſt of his enemies with whom he was to combate, being comfortably aſſured of having the better of them, and coming off a Conquerer. *All nations compaſſed me about* (ſaith he) *but in the name of the*

3. Walking by it.

Lord I will destroy them. They compassed me about, yea they compassed me about, but in the name of the Lord I will destroy them: They compassed me about like bees, they are quenched as the fire of thorns, for in the name of the Lord I will destroy them: So he setteth forth this his well grounded confidence, *Psal.* 118. 10, 11, 12. Thus did he go forth against these his *Temporal* Enemies; not in his own strength, but in the strength of the Lord; which he declareth, *v.* 14. *The Lord is my strength*, &c. And thus go we out against our *Spiritual* Enemies; not trusting in our *own strength*, which is but *weakness*, but in the strength of the Lord our God, building upon this, that his *grace is sufficient for us.*

And thus set we upon *Duties*, the duties of our *General* and *Particular* Callings: looking up unto God for his grace, his gracious assistance, that he would strengthen our hands. So did *Nehemiah* in that his work which he had undertaken, the rebuilding of the walls of *Jerusalem*, and repairing of the *Temple*, from which his adversaries *Sanballat* and *Tobiah*, and the rest of them, sought to deter and discourage him. *They all made us afraid, saying, Their hands shall be weakned from the work, that it be not done*, (so he sets it forth) *Neh.* 6. 9. But what saith he? *Now therefore, O God, strengthen my hands.* And thus go we upon whatever work or service it is that we go about, desiring God to strengthen our hands, enabling us by his grace to do what it is that he calleth us to: Which whilst we do, rest we comfortably assured,

red, that he who putteth us upon the ſervice, both can, and will gird us with ſtrength for the performance of it in ſuch a manner, as it may be acceptable unto him. Such *uſe* make we of this *Grace.*

3. Give unto God the glory of this grace.

Which having had ſome comfortable experience of, having found this grace in any kind ſufficient for us, now *give unto God the glory* of it. Acknowledging it to be his *grace* [*my grace*] give unto him the *glory*; ſaying with the Pſalmiſt, *Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name be the glory*, Pſal. 115. 1. Is it ſo, that we have been kept *from falling*, from falling into ſuch or ſuch ſins as we have been in danger of, kept *in falling*, ſo as that we have not fallen *totally*; that being fallen we have been *reſtored* and raiſed up again? Is it ſo, that we have found inward ſtrength to *reſiſt Temptations*, to *ſubdue Corruption*, to *perform Duties*, to *endure Sufferings*? Is it ſo, that we have profited in grace, and been more fruitfull in good works then others? Aſcribe we all to this *grace* of God, which hath been thus *ſufficient* for us. So did this our Apoſtle, whatever he was, whatever he had done, he aſcribes all to *Grace*. *By the grace of God I am that I am* (an Apoſtle) 1 *Cor.* 15. 10. *I laboured more abundantly then they all*, (then any of the reſt of the Apoſtles, ſo he goeth on, but mark what follows) *Yet not I, but the grace of God, which was with me.* Σὺν ἐμοὶ, Nor *in* me, but *with* me, the cooperating and aſſiſting grace of God: this it was that had enabled him to do what he did, to out-do the reſt of the Apoſtles

ſtles in his Miniſterial ſervice; and to this he aſcribeth it, not taking any ſhare of the glory to himſelf. And therein let him be a *Patern* for our imitation. Whatever we are, whatever we have done, or ſuffered, aſcribe all to this grace of God working in us and with us, enclining our wills, and giving us ſome ability to perform; ſo working in us both *to will and to do of his good pleaſure*. Bleſſing, praiſing and magnifying the *God of all grace*, who hath thus manifeſted and *made perfect his ſtrength in our weakneſs*. And ſo I am fallen upon the latter *Branch* of the Text, to which I ſhall now come.

For my ſtrength is made perfect in weakneſs.

The Reaſon of the Anſwer.

Here have we the *Reaſon* which the *Lord* renders for this his diſpenſation and dealing with his ſervant *Paul*, ſhewing why it was that he ſeemed to ſtop his eares againſt his prayers, not anſwering him, though earneſtly importuned. And why, when he did Anſwer him, he ſhould do it in ſuch a way, not by granting what he deſired, but that which might be equivalent to it. This proceeding of his was not without a *Reaſon*; which here he aſſigns, *For, &c.*

Obſerv.

God hath a Reaſon for all his Diſpenſations.

So it is, God being the *wiſe God*, *abſolutely* wiſe; (upon which account the Apoſtle calleth him *the onely wiſe God*, 1 Tim. 1. 17.) *infinitely* wiſe (*his wiſdom is infinite*, Pſal. 145. 5.) *Wiſdom* it ſelf, he doth whatſoever he doth *moſt wiſely*. So he did in his works of *Creation*. *O Lord how manifold are thy works? in wiſdom haſt thou*

thou made them all; Psal. 104. 24. *He hath established the world by his wisdom, and hath stretched out the heavens by his discretion*, Jer. 10. 12. And the like he doth in his works of *Providence*. His *general* providence, in ordering the world, and all things in it. His *special* providence which he exerciseth towards and upon his own people: He doth all things most wisely, so as he can *render a Reason* of what he doth. This *the Wiseman* maketh a Character of a *Wiseman*, *He is one that can render a Reason*, Prov. 26. 16. a Reason, as of such other things as are propounded to him, so of his own *Actions*, and undertakings. And this the *wise God* can do, give a Reason of all his Dispensations; even of those which to a carnal understanding may seem most *unreasonable* Such are his proceedings sometimes with his own people, when he seemeth to deal severely and harshly with them, suffering them to be brought into, and lie under great extremities (as here he did his servant *Paul*) not hearing their cry, not answering their prayers, not granting what they make suit for. Yet this doth not he without a *Reason*. Herein he hath an eye both at *them*, and at *himself*. At *them*, doing what he doth for their good, their *Profit*, Ἐπὶ τὸ συμφέρον, Heb. 12. 10. For the exercising, confirming, and increasing of his graces in them, their *faith*, their *patience*, and for the humbling of them; which (it may be) he seeth they have need of, being in the like danger that *Paul* was, of being exalted and lifted up above measure. *At himself*, his own glory. *Lazarus* (as we have the Story

Joh. 11.) he fals ſick, dies, is buried, lieth four dayes in the grave. Now (as the Jewes ſome of them ſaid v. 37.) *Could not Chriſt have cauſed that he ſhould not have died?* Or if he had ſuffered him to die, could not he have prevented his burial, reſtoring him to life again before his interment? Or when he was buried, could not he have raiſed him up again before the fourth day? but ſuffer him to lie ſo long in the grave, til (as *Martha* concluded) his caſe was now deſperate, and paſt all hope. Lord (ſaith ſhe) by *this time he ſtinketh, for he hath been dead four dayes*, v. 39. Now wherefore was all this? why it was not without a *Reaſon*. So our Saviour himſelf telleth the Meſſengers who brought him the firſt tidings of his ſickneſs, v. 4. *This ſickneſſe* (ſaith he) *is not unto death*, (*i. e.* irreparably and irrevocably, ſo as that he ſhould be held under the power of it) *but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby.* And the like he ſaith to *Martha*, being at the grave with him, v. 40. *Jeſus ſaith unto her, ſaid I not unto thee, that if thou wouldeſt believe, thou ſhouldſt ſee the glory of God.* See the glory of his power manifeſted in his Reſurrection. Thus hath God in theſe Diſpenſations an eye both at his *People*, and at *Himſelf*. And upon this double account it was that the Lord here permitted his ſervant *Paul* to be thus *buffeted by the Meſſenger of Satan*, as he was, and that not for a brunt, a ſhort skirmiſh, but continuing him under the Combate, notwithſtanding his frequent and earneſt ſolicitations for a diſcharge.

This

This was done, as for *Pauls good*, his Spiritual profit and benefit, in preventing a great evil, which he was in danger of, so for the *glory of God*, as the glory of his *grace*, so of his *power*, both which by this means should be more clearly manifested in the supporting of him in this Conflict, and bringing him off a Conquerour in the end. So the Lord here giveth him an account of this his dealing with him. *My grace is sufficient for thee, For my strength is made perfect in weakness.*

Which let it teach every of us that *Lesson* which our Saviour would have his Disciples to learn and practise, Luke 21. 19. *In our patience to possesse our souls.* Resting contented with Gods dispensations and dealings with us. Not being too inquisitive concerning the *Reason* of them, overcuriously enquiring into it. *Over-curiously* (I say.) The Story tells us of *Rebecca*, Gen. 25. how that feeling her twins strugling together in her wombe, which was to her no small pain, she cryeth out, *If it be so, why am I thus?* v. 22. not knowing the Reason of that extraordinary commotion within her; which being desirous to understand, *she went to enquire of the Lord* (as it there followeth,) making her addresse to him by prayer, or seeking unto some *Prophet*, that he would please to acquaint her with it. And the like Christians not onely may do; but ought to do; in their Afflictions and distresses, when the hand of God lieth heavy upon them, begging it of him that he would please to acquaint them with the *Reason* of his so dealing with them, why

Application.

Rest contented with his Dispensations.

Not overcuriously enquiring into the Reason of them.

it is so with them; without which they cannot make so good a use of the Affliction, as otherwise they might and ought. But herein (I say) be not *overcuriously inquisitive*. If God shall hide the particular cause and Reason from us, yet know that a *Reason* there is; resting contented with those general *Reasons* preassigned. This God hath done or suffered for his *own glory* and *our good*; that so we may come to have more experience of him and our selves, to know his *power*, and our own *weakness* more fully then we have done. But I shall not insist upon this, which I have gleaned by the way, taking it up from the Connexion of these words with the former, intimated in the Causal Particle; *For*.

Explication. Three particulars unfolded.

Come we to close with the words themselves. wherein by way of *Explication*, I shall unfold unto you these three Particulars: 1. What we are here to understand by *strength*. 2. How this strength is said to be *made perfect*. 3. How *made perfect in weakness*. Touch upon them severally.

Question 1. What here to be understood by strength.

What are we here to understand by *strength*?

Answer. The Vulger Latine Translation followed by many.

Ans. Δύναμις μου, *Potentia mea*, *My power*, or *strength*. The vulgar *Latine* Translation here renders the word *Virtus*; and so leaving out the *Pronoune* Mu, *My*, readeth the words thus, *Virtus in infirmitate perficitur*, *Virtue is perfected in* (or *by*) *Infirmity*, or *Weakness*. Which gave occasion (as is conceived) as to that ancient Father *Augustine*, so to almost all the *Doctors* of the Church of *Rome*, lighting their Candles at his fire, to run out into an impertinent Discourse about the increasing and perfecting of grace and vertue

vertue in this way, by or through weakneſs and infirmity. Which (ſaith *Aquinas* and *Carthuſian*, commenting upon the words) may be ſaid to be done two wayes; *Materialiter, Occaſionaliter, Materially, Occaſionally*: 1. *Materially*, when infirmity and weakneſs is the *matter* about which the vertue is exerciſed; as *Patience* is in the bearing of ſickneſs and other tryals, which are ſaid to *work* it. *Rom.* 5. 3. *Tribulation worketh Patience*; which it doth by trying and exerciſing of *faith*, from whence true *Chriſtian Patience* ſpringeth, (as St. *James* tells us, *Jam.* 1. 3. *Knowing the trying of your faith worketh patience.* Thus is this, and other graces confirmed and encreaſed by ſanctifyed Afflictions. *Paul* was made the more humble by this *buffeting of Satan.* 2. *Occaſionally*, when Afflictions are by accident made an occaſion, or means of encreaſing any grace or vertue in the ſoul. *Calamitas virtutis occaſio eſt* (ſaith *Seneca.*) Calamity is an occaſion of vertue. Thus *Temptations* become a means for the confirming and ſtrengthning of faith, which is exerciſed thereby. Even as the ſhaking of the tree is a means for the better rooting of it, not in itſelf, but occaſionally; ſo is faith confirmed by Temptation, by cauſing the ſoul being ſhaken, to take the faſter hold of Chriſt. Thus doth the wiſdome and goodneſſe of God bring good out of evil, making things in themſelves hurtful to become advantageous unto his people. Upon which account it is that he leaveth them to be exerciſed therewith. Upon ſuch account it was (as *Aquinas* notes it writing upon

Vertue is perfected by infirmity; and how.

upon the Text) that God would not have all the *Heathen Nations* to be destroyed and rooted out, but left a remnant of them, which were as *wasps* to the Israelites *hive*; continually infesting of them, and making incursions upon them. This he did with an eye to his people, for their good, to *prove* them and to *teach* them; Both which we find given as Reasons hereof, Judg. 3. To *prove* them; *These are the Nations which the Lord left to prove Israel by them*, v. 1. that he might thereby try them whether they would be constant in their faith and obedience; cleaving close unto him in the Profession and Practice of his pure Religion. To *teach* them, *viz.* the Art of *Martial Discipline*. So it followeth in the next verse, *That the generations of the children of Israel might know to teach them war, at the least such as before knew nothing thereof*, v. 2. That being continually exercised by these their enemies, they might themselves grow expert in Military affairs, so as to teach their Posterity, that so they might not in aftertimes become a prey to them or any other. Which policy (as he also notes) was afterwards made use of by *Scipio*, who would not yield that the City of *Carthage* should be destroyed, that so the *Romans* having a forreign enemy to wage war with, they might not be infested with what was far worse, a *Civil War* amongst themselves. And thus God suffers his people to be exercised with *Temptations* and trials from abroad, to be assaulted by *Satan* and his *Instruments*, that so by that means inward *Corruption* may be weakened, and the

graces

graces of his Spirit by the exercise of them confirmed and strengthned.

A truth not to be denied or questioned. Gods people are gainers, and oft-times great gainers by their afflictions and sufferings. *Whilest the outward man perisheth, the inward man is renewed day by day* (as the Apostle telleth us) 2 Cor. 4. 16. whilest the Body is weakned by sickness, or other sufferings, the soul getteth strength, increasing in grace and vertue. This both *Divines* and *Moralists* have taken notice of, who have looked upon afflictions as the School of vertue. *Calamitas sæpius disciplina virtutis est* (saith *Minutius Felix.*) Calamity is often the discipline of vertue. Whereby men are often much bettered. *Optimos nos esse dum infirmi sumus* (so said *Pliny*, cited by *Grotius* upon the Text, together with the former Author,) Men are then best, when they are weakest. And this Gods people have usually had comfortable experience of. So had *David*, who (as he declareth it) found great spiritual benefit by his afflictions. *It is good for me* (saith he) *that I have been afflicted, that I might learn thy statutes*, Psal. 119. 71. *Before I was afflicted, I went astray, but now have I kept thy word*, v. 67. And so have many others, who have had cause to confesse that they have been more beholding to God for some one Affliction, then for all the temporal mercies that ever he bestowed upon them. A Truth

A truth, Gods people are oft-times great gainers by Afflictions.

And that a *useful* one, teaching Christians, being Gods children, to kisse their fathers rod, quietly and patiently to submit to what ever Afflicti-

And a useful Truth.

But not pertinent to the Text.

Afflictions and Sufferings he ſhall pleaſe to exerciſe them with. But I ſhall not now inlarge upon it, looking upon it as impertinent to the Text, not finding any ground or footing in it. All the Original *Greek Copies* with one conſent (as *Beza* hath obſerved) inſerting the *Pronoun*, reading it δύναμίς μου, *Potentia mea. My power*, (as the former Tranſlation hath it) or *my ſtrength* (as the latter) the Power and ſtrength of *God*.

Gods ſtrength what.

Now what this *Power*, this *Strength* of God is, I ſhall not need to tell you. It is a divine *Attribute*, a *Property* of God. *God hath ſpoken once, twice have I heard this, that power belongeth unto God*, Pſal. 62. 11. *With him is wiſdom and ſtrength*, Job 12. 13. 16. An *eſſential Perfection*, whereby he is able to do, and doth whatſoever he will. *He doth whatſoever pleaſeth him.* Eccleſ. 8. 3.

Queſtion 2. How is his ſtrength ſaid to be made Perfect.

But how then is this *Power* or *Strength* of his (being ſuch) ſaid to be *made perfect*? That is the ſecond Enquiry. Τελειοῦται. *Perfecting* preſuppoſeth *Imperfection*. *When that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part* (and ſo *imperfect*) *is done away*, 1 Cor. 13. 10. Whileſt Gods Saints, the beſt of them are called upon to *perfect holineſs* (which they are by the Apoſtle, 2 Cor. 7. 1.) it mindeth them that as yet they are not *Perfect*. But this cannot be ſaid, or thought of *God*, who is every wayes *Perfect*; Such are his *Wayes*, his Actions, and proceedings. *As for God his way is perfect*, Pſal. 18. 30. And ſuch are his *Attributes*, being all *Perfections*.

Perfections. How then can his *power*, his *ſtrength*, be ſaid to be *made perfect*?

To this *Illiricus* returns Anſwer. The power of God is ſaid to be perfected, *Non quoad eſſentiam ſed quoad efficaciam*, not in reſpect of the *eſſence* and *being*, but of the *efficacy* and *operation* of it; when it maketh a more full and perfect impreſſion upon the Creature, being put forth and exerciſed in a more compleat and perfect way. Now it is perfected, not by way of *Augmentation*, but *Manifeſtation*. And to the ſame purpoſe *Hemingius*. The power of God is ſaid to be perfected, *Non in ſe, ſed quoad nos*. Not *in it ſelf*, but in reſpect of *us*, in our apprehenſions and conceivings. Now thus the power of God may be ſaid to be perfected two wayes, *Quoad exercitium, et quoad ſenſum & agnitionem*. (I take the ground of the Diſtinction from Mr. *Calvin* writing upon the words) in reſpect of the *exerciſe and manifeſtation* of it, and in reſpect of the *ſenſe and acknowledgement* of it. 1. In reſpect of the *exerciſe and manifeſtation* of it, when God doth put forth his power, and exerciſe it upon the creature in ſome particular act, or acts, whereby it is made viſible, being clearly manifeſted to them and others. Thus the Lord biddeth *Moſes* tell *Pharaoh*, *Exod.* 9. 16. *And in very deed for this cauſe have I raiſed thee up, for to ſhew in thee my power, and that my name may be declared through all the earth*; viz. by my miraculous operations, my great and wonderful judgements, which I ſhall execute upon thee and thine. 2. In reſpect of *ſenſe* and *acknowledgement*;

Not by way of Augmentation, but Manifeſtation. Not in it ſelf, but in reſpect of us.

Virtus mea, inquit Dominus, perficitur in hominum infirmitate; hoc eſt, Materiam habet ſe merendi, quum ſe prodit hominum Infirmitas; neque id modo, ſed clarius agnoſcitur ut decet. Nam verbum Perfici relationem habet ad hominum ſenſum & agnitionem: quia non perficitur niſi palam reluceat, ut habeat ſuam laudem Calvin. Com. in Text.

knowledgment; when the power being thus put forth, not only maketh an impreſſion *upon* the Creature, but *in* it, ſo as that power is taken notice of, apprehended and acknowledged, and the glory thereof given unto God. Thus alſo is the *power of God* ſaid to be *made perfect*, not in *it ſelf*, but in our *ſenſe* and *feeling*, becauſe beholding it more clearly, we are the more affected with it, admiring it, and ſo giving unto God the glory of it. But this I ſhall open more fully anon.

Queſt. 3. How made perfect in weakneſs.

The third and chief Enquiry is yet behind. How this power of God is ſaid to be *made perfect in weakneſs*?

Anſwer. The words rendred two wayes.

Ἐν ἀσθενείᾳ. The words may be rendred two wayes; either *By weakneſs*, or *In weakneſs*. The Original will bear either; and I ſhall touch upon both, looking upon them as pertinent and uſefull.

1. By weakneſs.

1. *By weakneſs.* So *Beza* here renders it, *Per infirmitatem*, *By*, or *Through*, weakneſs (as our former Tranſlation hath it.) Now thus the *Power of God* may be ſaid to be perfected two wayes, (to follow him in his Gloſs upon the words.) Either when he *worketh without means*, or *worketh great things by ſmall means*.

Thus Gods ſtrength is manifeſted.

1. By working without means

1. When he worketh Ἀμέσως, *immediately* by himſelf, without the uſe of any *means* or *inſtruments*. Thus was the power of God put forth in his firſt work, his work of *Creation*; when he produced all things out of nothing, only by his Word. There was no preexiſtent *matter* to work upon,

upon, no *Instruments* to work by, nothing but his own *Fiat*, his word of Command, which going out of his mouth, effected what he had purposed. *Dixit & factum est; He spake and it was done, He said let there be light, and there was light*, Gen. 1. Here might the power of God be truly said to be *perfected by weakness*, by that which had *no strength* in it (which the word Ἀσθένεια, being compounded of a *Privat*; and σθένος *robur*, properly signifieth.) *Non entis nulla vis, nulla efficacia* (say the *Schools*:) That which is not, cannot have any force to produce or bring forth ought; where there is no *existence*, there can be no *operation*: So as herein was the power of God, his Almighty power, clearly and wonderfully manifested, in thus bringing all things out of nothing. Here was his *strength made perfect in and by weakness*. And so it is in his works of *Providence*, wherein he sometimes acteth and worketh after the same manner. Such were the *Cures* which our Saviour wrought upon those impotent persons which were brought or commended to him, being effected only by his *word*. *Speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed*, (saith the *Centurion* unto him) *Matth.* 8. 8. Here is the power of God perfected by weakness.

2. And so it is when he worketh great things by *weak Instruments*, by *unlikely means*. That *Sampson* should do such executions, as he is said to have done, *Judg.* 15. 15. with the *Jaw bone of an Ass*, wherewith he slew a thousand men; *with the jaw bone of an Ass heaps upon heaps, with the jaw bone of an Ass have I slain a thousand men*,

2. Working great things by weak Instruments.

men, v. 16. this shewed the strength of his arm, (as it did of *Scanderbags*, who is reported to have done the like with an ordinary sword or *Cimetere*, which others, wanting his arm, could make little use of). Thus where great things are effected by weak Instruments, by small and unlikely means, here is *the Arme of the Lord revealed*. So it was in the delivering of his people *Israel* out of *Egypt* by the hand of *Moses*, who, when a child, was cast out *among the bul-rushes*, Exod. 2. 3. An unlikely instrument ever to have effected so great a work; yet God made use of him in it, and effected it by him, which shewed the strength of his hand, not of *Moses's* but of *Gods*, as the Lord tells him, *Exod.* 6. 1. *And the Lord said unto Moses, Now shalt thou see what I will do unto Pharaoh: for with a strong hand shall he let them go; and with a strong hand shall he drive them out of his land*; that is, my hand shall be so strong, working so powerfully upon him, that he shall not only be content to let the people go, but withal his power be ready to expel them, rather then keep them Captives any longer. And so, that the *sounding of the Trumpets by the Priests, and the shouting of the people* should do as much, if not more than the greatest Canons could have done, level the walls of *Jericho*, (of which we read) *Josh.* 6. 20. *Heb.* 11. 30. That *Gideon* with his *three hundred* men, armed only with *Trumpets*, *Pitchers*, and *Lamps* in them, should rout such a strong and numerous Army of the *Midianites* in such a manner as is recorded *Judg.* 7. That *Jonathan* with his *Armour-bearer*

bearer ſhould make ſuch a diſcomfiture and ſlaughter among the *Philiſtines*, as is reported, 1 *Sam.* 14. That little *David*, earſtwhile a poor deſpicable *Shepheard*, ſcorned of his brethren, armed only with a *ſling* and a *ſtone*, ſhould bring down the *Philiſtines pride*, the great *Goliah*, laying him level with the ground, and taking his head from his ſhoulders; In all theſe was *divine power made perfect*, in and by *humane weakneſs*, doing great things by weak *Inſtruments*.

Which alſo it is by making uſe of weak or unlikely *means*. That the *Rock* in the wilderneſs ſhould yield *water* to the *Iſraelites*, to ſerve them and their Beaſts, *Numb.* 20. 8, 11. that the *Jaw bone* ſhould do the like to *Sampſon*, Judg. 15. 19. That *Eliſah* in the ſtrength of one meals meat ſhould travel forty dayes and forty nights, 1 *King.* 19. 8. That a *tree* being caſt by *Moſes* into the waters, ſhould take away the bitterneſs of them, and make them ſweet and pleaſant, *Exod.* 15. 25. That a *handfull of ſalt* caſt by the Prophet *Eliſha* into the waters at *Jeruſalem*, ſhould work the like cure, healing them which before were unwholſome, and making the ground, which was barren before, become fruitfull, 2 *King.* 2. 21. That the ſame hand, by caſting a *handfull of meal* into the *pot of pottage* wherein the *gourd* had been boyled, ſhould take away the unſavoury taſte and deadly quality of it, making it both tooth-ſome and wholſome, 2 *King.* 4. 40, 41. That ſeven times waſhing in *Jordan* ſhould cure *Naaman* of his *Leproſie*; (which we find in the Chapter following.) That

Or by ſmall and unlikely means.

a piece of *Clay* tempered with *ſpittle* ſhould open the eyes, and give ſight to him that was born blind, *Joh. 9. 6.* That *five loaves and two fiſhes* ſhould feed and abundantly ſatisfie ſo many thouſands, *Mat.* 14. 19. That as the *hemm of Chriſts garment*, ſo *Peters ſhadow*, and *Pauls handkerchief*, ſhould cure thoſe which were diſeaſed, and cauſe the evil ſpirits to depart from thoſe which were poſſeſſed with them, as we read *Matth. 9. 20. Act. 5. 15. & 19. 12.* Here was the power of God made perfect by weakneſs, being wonderfully manifeſted in working ſo great things by ſo ſmall and unlikely means.

Grace working by weak means and Inſtruments.

To which numetous inſtances adde but one more, (which *Beza* in his Annotation upon the Text putteth into my hand) And it is the Apoſtles own, 1 Cor. 1. What ſo great a work upon earth, as to *open the eyes* of man, (the eyes of their ſouls,) and *to turn them from darkneſſe to light, and from the power of Satan unto God*, (which is the work that the Lord layes out for his ſervant *Paul*, Acts 26. 20.) to bring the world into ſubjection to Jeſus Chriſt? Now what are the *Means*, what are the *Inſtruments* which God maketh uſe of for the effecting of this great work? *Weak Means*, *weak Inſtruments*. *Weak Means*, the *fooliſhneſs of Preaching*. So *Paul* there calls it, v. 21. *It pleaſed God by the fooliſhneſs of Preaching to ſave them that believe.* Μωρίας τοῦ κηρύγματος, *Stultitia prædicationis*, put for *Stulta prædicatio* (as *Beza* renders it.) *Fooliſhneſs of preaching*, that is, *fooliſh preaching*, ſo called (as

(as many other things in Scripture commonly are) κατὰ τὸ φαινόμενον non κατὰ τὸ ὄντως (as *Grotius* notes upon it) not that it is so in truth, it being, in respect of the *subject* of it, the *matter* preached, which is *Christ Jesus*, the *wisdom of God* (as it is called v. 24.) but in as much as it seemed so to some, being then by many (as it seemeth it is by too many at this day among our selves) so accounted and esteemed. And such as the *Means* is, such are the *Instruments*; men, weak men, *Earthen vessels* (as the Apostle terms the Ministers of the Gospel, 2 Cor. 4. 7.) Men that are Ὁμοιοπαθὴς, (as St. *James* saith of *Eliah*, Jam. 5. 17.) *subject to like passions*, like infirmities that others are. Such were the *Apostles* who layed the foundation, and such are their successors who build upon that foundation; Yet this is the *Means*, these are the *Instruments* which God hath made choice of for the effecting of this great work, the beginning and carrying on the work of his grace in the hearts of his Elect. *God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and the weak things of the world to confound the things that are mighty*; (so it there followeth) v. 27. Now wherefore hath God done this? Why, for the manifestation of his own power, that his *strength may be made perfect by weakness*. Therefore hath he made choice of this *Means*, the preaching of Christ crucified, which St. *Paul* there calls *the power of God*, v. 24. *We preach Christ crucified, unto the Jewes a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness, But unto them which are*

called, both Jewes and Greeks (i. e. Jewes and Gentiles) *Christ the power of God, and the wisdome of God.* In this *Preaching*, which many have so slight an esteem of, is the power and wisdom of God wonderfully manifested, in making such use of so weak a means. And therefore also hath he made choice of such *Instruments*, as the Apostle tells us in that Text even now named, 2 Cor. 4. 7. *We have this treasure in earthen vessels* (or *vessels of shell* (as the word in the Original properly signifieth) ὀστρακίνοις σκεύεσιν, *that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.* The weaker the *Instrument*, the greater is the strength of him that effecteth great things by it. And thus you see the former of these senses opened unto you, how the Power of God may be said to be made perfect *by weakness*. Passe we to the second.

2. In weakness.

As By, so *In* weakness. So our *Translation* renders it most agreeably to the Original. *My strength is made perfect* ἐν ἀσθενείᾳ, *In infirmitate, In weakness.* Now thus this Power may be said to be perfected two wayes; *In weakness it self*, or *in the sense of weakness.* In *weakness it self* it is made perfect, both in respect of the *exercise*; and *manifestation* of it. In the *sense* of weakness it is made perfect in respect of the *feeling* and *acknowledgement* of it. All these, as I conceive, come within the compasse of the Phrase; I shall touch upon them severally, and briefly, reserving the *Application* of all to the Close.

Thus Gods strength is perfected two wayes.

In

In weakneſſe it ſelf. Here is Gods ſtrength *made perfect*, 1. In weakneſſe it ſelf.

1. In the *exerciſe* of it. So it is, *Mans extremity is Gods opportunity.* Then is Gods time which he often maketh choice of for the exerciſing and putting forth of his power, in the greateſt weakneſſes of his people, when they are brought to the greateſt ſtraits and exigents. *In monte Jehovah. In the Mount of the Lord it ſhall be ſeen*, or *In the Mount will the Lord be ſeen*; So *Abraham* called the name of that place where he was about to ſacrifice his Son, *Jehovah Jireh*, Gen. 22. 14. When his Son, his dear Son *Iſaac*, the Son of his hopes, in whom he expected that *all the Nations of the Earth ſhould be bleſſed*, was laid upon an altar, there bound, and the fathers hand lifted up to give the fatal blow, to ſlay him, then the Angel of the Lord appeared to him, reſcuing his Son, and providing an Ἀντίλυτρον, a *Ram for a ſacrifice* to be offered up in his ſtead. Whereupon that *name* afterwards became *Proverbial* among the *Jewes*, to mind poſterity of that which *Abraham* intended by it; how that God, taking notice of the ſtraits of his people, he is ready to ſtep in unto them, and provide for them in their greateſt neceſſities. So he did for his people *Iſrael* in *Egypt*, *Duplicantur lateres tunc venit Moſes.* When their taske was doubled, and ſo their condition worſe then ever it was, then was *Moſes* ſent by God to be a *Saviour*, a *deliverer* 1. In the exerciſe of it.

unto them, Exod. 5. And thus God is pleased often to step into his people, then and not till then, when they are reduced to the greatest extremities. When creature helps and comforts fail, then succouring them; *When my father, and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up*, Psal. 27. 10. In their *weaknesse* putting forth his *strength*. So he did in his servant *Sarah*, of whom we read, *Heb.* 11. 11. *Through faith also Sarah her self received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child, when she was past age*;] *In the ordinary* course of nature past child-bearing, her *womb* being *dead*, as her Husbands *body* also is said to be, Rom. 4. 19. Thus is God pleased often to come in unto his people by such unexpected providences, doing for them beyond their own, or others expectations; so making his *strength perfect in their weaknesse*. So he did in those *Martyrs*, of whom the Apostle telleth us, Heb. 11. 34. that *Out of weaknesse they were made strong*; being raised up from dangerous sicknesses, and restored again to former strength, as *David* and *Hezekiah* were, Psal. 26. 32. Isa. 38. &c. And so was it with *Paul*, who saith of himself, in the verse after the Text, *When I am weak, then am I strong*: When weak in the *flesh*, he was strong in the *Spirit*, when weak in *himself* then strong in his *God*, whose *power* was exercised, and so made *perfect* in his *weaknesse*.

2. In the manifestation of it.

And being thus exercised, it is also *manifested*; and upon that account also may be said to be *perfected*. *Perficitur*, id est *illustratur* (saith *Grotius*.)

Grotius,) *My ſtrength is made perfect in weakneſſe*, that is, made clearly to appear. So it is; *No where is the power of God more clearly and viſibly manifeſted, then in the weakneſſe of his people. Contraria juxta ſe poſita magis eluceſcunt.* Contraries being ſet one againſt the other, (as white and black in a Wall or Picture) they do mutually illuſtrate and ſet off each other. And ſo do *ſtrength* and *weakneſſe*; *Gods* ſtrength meeting with *Mans* weakneſſe, and there putting forth it ſelf, it becometh illuſtrious, being thereby made the more viſible and admirable; and ſo may be truly ſaid to be *made perfect in weakneſſe.*

In weakneſſe,] To reflect upon the word a little, enquiring more fully, what we may here underſtand by it. This whileſt we do, we ſhall find it like the *Rock* in the Wilderneſſe, which being ſtruck upon, the waters guſhed out amain, yielding us abundance of *matter*, as that did to the *Iſraelites* of *water.* The word weakneſſe explained.

Weakneſſe. Ἀσθένεια The word (as you have heard) in the proper ſignification of it imports a *Privation of ſtrength.* Now *Privation* (as Philoſophers diſtinguiſh it) is either *Total* or *Partial*, in whole or in part. *Totally* a privation or want of all ſtrength. *Partial*, a privation or want of ſome meaſure of it. And both theſe ſhall we find in the Sons of men, who ſince the fall of their firſt *Parents*, of *ſtrong* are become *weak.* A twofold weakneſſe.

1. Total; which is { Corporal. Spiritual.

1. With a *Total* weakneſſe. Which is twofold, either *Corporal* or *Spiritual*. *Corporal* in the *Body*, *Spiritual* in the *Soul*. In the *Body*, which is ſubject to *death*, where (as the Apoſtle ſaith of it, 1 Cor. 15. 43.) *It is ſown in weakneſſe*; Ἐν ἀσθενείᾳ, the ſame word with that in the Text. Being under the power of death, and laid in the grave, like a grain of corn ſown in the earth, it is deſtitute of all ſenſe and motion, of all natural faculties and operations, not able to do any thing for it ſelf, not ſo much as to drive, or keep away the worms from feeding upon it. Such is the weakneſſe of the *Body* in death. *Art thou alſo become weak as we?* (ſo the dead are brought in as ſpeaking to the living,) *Iſa.* 14. 10. And ſuch is the weakneſſe of the *ſoul* before it be quickened by divine grace; a *total* weakneſſe, a privation of all ſpiritual ſtrength. *When we were yet without ſtrength in due time Chriſt died for the ungodly*, Rom. 5. 6. ἀσθενῶν ὄντων, altogether invalid, unable to do or to will that which is good. Being *dead in treſpaſſes and ſins*, Eph. 2. 1. having no more ſtrength to do any *ſpiritual* actions then a dead man hath to do *natural*. This is a *Total* weakneſſe.

2. Pattial, which is { Temporal. Spiritual. Temporal Infirmities.

2. There is a *Partial* weakneſſe. Which again is either *Temporal* or *Spiritual*. *Temporal* in the *Outward* man, *Spiritual* in the *Inward*. In the *outward man*; whether in the *Body*, Bodily infirmities, which *Timothy* had great experience of, whereupon *Paul* adviſeth him to make uſe of

of wine; *Use a little wine for thy ſtomacks ſake, and thine often infirmities*, 1 Tim. 5. 23. διὰς πυκνὰς σου ἀσθενείας, his frequent diſeaſes and diſtempers which he was ſubject to by reaſon of the weakneſſe of his concoction, and his feeble temper and conſtitution. And ſuch was the weakneſſe wherewith the *Corinthians* were viſited, not ſo much for their *neglect* of the *Sacrament* of the *Lords Supper*, (which for ought appears, they were not guilty of) as for their abuſing and profaning of it, their *eating and drinking unworthily. For this cauſe* (ſaith the Apoſtle) *many are weak and ſickly among you*; Ἀσθενεῖς καὶ ἄῤῥωστοι, 1 Cor. 11. 30. being viſited with corporal diſeaſes and diſtempers. Or in *Eſtate*, or *good name*, or *Liberty*, &c. when a man is exerciſed with *Loſſes* and *Croſſes*, with *Reproaches* or *Perſecutions*, theſe alſo are *Infirmities*, *weakneſſes*. So we find them called by our Apoſtle (as in the 5th. verſe of this Chapter, ſo) in the words after the Text, *Moſt gladly therefore will I glory in my infirmities*, ἐν ταῖς ἀσθενείαις. Which what he meant by he explains in the verſe following. *Therefore* (ſaith he) *I take pleaſure in Infirmities, in Reproaches, in neceſſities, in perſecutions, in Diſtreſſes for Chriſts ſake.* Theſe were the Infirmities in which he ſaith he would *glory*, vying with the falſe Apoſtles, ſetting his many croſſes and ſufferings againſt their vain brags and boaſtings. And in ſuch a ſenſe underſtand we the word, Gal. 4. 13. Where he ſaith to his *Galathians*; *Ye know how through infirmitie of the fleſh I preached the Goſpel to you at the firſt*; he being then infirme

infirme in Body, or much broken with manifold griefs and afflictions, and troubles which he met with amongst them. These are *temporal Infirmities*, to which the *outward man* is subject.

Spiritual Infirmities, to be found in the Livesor Hearts of Gods Children.

Besides which there are *Spiritual Infirmities* and weaknesses which are to be found in Gods own children, and that either in their *Lives* or *Hearts*. In their *Lives*, *Actual Infirmities*, slips, failings, sins, which not being willfully acted and committed, are to be looked upon in them as *infirmities*. *We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak* (saith *Paul* to his *Romans*) Rom. 15.1. τὰ ἀσθενήματα, so to bear with their failings as to pity and succour them. In their *Hearts*; *Habitual Infirmities*. When *Corruption* is *strong*, and *grace* is *weak*. *The Spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak* (saith our Saviour to his Disciples,) Mat. 26. 41. There was in them a supernatural principle of grace, which inclined their wills to what was good, but sinful corruption (some remainders whereof there were yet in them) did much weaken them, hindering them in doing of the good which they desired. Such *Infirmity* is to be found in the best of *Saints*, who though in comparison of others they are *strong* men, *we that are strong*, Rom. 15. 1. *I have written unto you young men, because ye are strong*, 1 Joh. 2. 14. that is, comparatively strong, yet in themselves they are *weak*, so as they cannot *do the good which they would* (which *Paul* complains of in himself, Rom. 7. 19.) But in some more

more then in others, in *weak Christians*; In whom there is weakness of *Knowledge*, or of *Faith*. Of the former of which the Apostle speaketh, Rom. 14. 1. *Him that is weak in the faith receive you, &c.* viz. the weak brother, who is weak in knowledge, not being so perfectly, so throughly instructed in the doctrine of the Gospel, as others are, and he ought to be. And so again, Rom. 6. 19. where he tells his *Romans* that the Reason why he spake to him after that manner that he did, *After the manner of men*, expressing and setting forth to them sublime spiritual Mysteries by vulgar similitudes, which it may be did not so fully suit with the matter intended, was *the Infirmity of their flesh*, that is, the weakness and dullness of their understandings, which being a relict of the *flesh*, a remainder of sinful Corruption, makes spiritual things hard to be apprehended in their own natural sense, so as to make a right use of them. Of the latter speaketh the *Psalmist*, *David*, or *Asaph*, Psal. 77. 10. *And I said this is my infirmity*, confessing and acknowledging the weakness of his faith and confidence in God. And such weakness the best of Saints have experience of, being through the weakness of grace, unable of themselves to *Resist Temptation*, to *subdue Corruption*, to *Perform Duties*, *to endure Sufferings*, of which I spake before.

These are the *Infirmities* which Gods Elect people are subject to, which as you see are of divers kinds. Now in all and every of them is the *power of God* exercised and manifested, and so

In all these is Gods strength made Perfect.

so may be truly said to be *made perfect in weakneſſe*. Reflect we upon the particulars briefly, giving but a touch upon each.

1. In Totalweakneſſe.

1. So it is in that *Total weakneſſe*, whether of the *Body* or *Soul*: of the *Body* in the *ſecond Reſurrection*. When *that which was ſown in weakneſſe, ſhall be raiſed in power* (as the Apoſtle ſaith of it in the Text fore-cited, 1 Cor. 15. 43.) that dead body which lay rotting in the grave, being returned to the duſt from whence it came, ſhall be raiſed up in ſuch a ſtate as it ſhall be, an active, vigorous, incorruptible, glorious body (all which the Apoſtle there ſets forth,) here ſhall Gods *ſtrength be perfected in weakneſſe*, his power be put forth, and wonderfully manifeſted in working ſuch a change. It is that which this our Apoſtle ſaith concerning *Chriſt*, Rom. 1. 4. *He was declared to be the Son of God, with power*, &c. *by the reſurrection from the dead*. Herein did he put forth and manifeſt his Almighty power, in raiſing up his own Body from the grave, and ſo declared himſelf to be what he was, the Son of God. And thus ſhall his power be exerciſed and manifeſted in the *general Reſurrection* at the Laſt Day; When *All that are in the graves ſhall hear his voice and ſhall come forth* (as our Saviour deſcribeth the manner of that Reſurrection, Joh. 5. 28, 29.) here ſhall be a glorious manifeſtation of the *power* of *God*; whoſe *ſtrength* ſhall then be *made perfect in weakneſs*.

1. Corporal, in the ſecond Reſurrection, raiſing up the dead Body from the Grave.

2. Spiritual in the firſt Re-

2. And what it then ſhall be in the *ſecond*, it already is in the *firſt Reſurrection*; In raiſing up *dead*

dead ſouls from the grave of ſin to a ſtate of Righteouſneſs and Life; here alſo is the power of God exerciſed and manifeſted. As it was in raiſing up *Lazarus*'s dead *body*; after it had lain in the grave four dayes, putting a natural life into it, ſo is it in raiſing up dead *ſouls*, after that they have lain for many years in the grave of ſin, rotting and putrifying there, putting a ſpiritual life into them. And doing this in the like way, by the like means, onely by his *voice*, his word. *The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead ſhall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear ſhall live*, Joh. 5. 28. *The dead*, men ſpiritually dead, dead in treſpaſſes and ſins (as all by nature are.) They ſhall *hear the voice* of Chriſt, hear him ſpeaking to them in the Miniſtry of his Word. And hearing him, receiving and believing in him, they ſhall *live*, live the life of *grace* here, and *glory* hereafter. Here is Gods ſtrength made perfect in *Total* weakneſſe.

ſurrection; raiſing up the ſoul from the death of ſin to the life of Grace.

And ſo it is in *Partial*. Where firſt look we at that which we call *Temporal*, the weakneſſe of the *outward man*. Here alſo is divine ſtrength made perfect, exerciſed and manifeſted. So it is in the weakneſſe of the *Body*; in ſupporting weak and infirme Bodies, drawing forth the thread of their lives beyond their own or others expectation, and ſometimes making uſe of them as very ſerviceable Inſtruments, in doing great ſervice to God and his Church, which was *Timothies* caſe; who though of an infirme conſtitutiou, yet was an eminent labourer in the vine-

2. In Partial weakneſſe.

1. Temporal, of the Outward Man.

Supporting Infirme Bodies.

Restoring them from dangerous sicknesses.

vineyard of his Lord. And sometimes in *restoring* and raising them up from dangerous, and (in their own and others apprehensions) desperate diseases; when they are at the brink of the pit, the mouth of the grave, ready to be swallowed up, then working unexpected deliverances for them. Such Providences the sons of men have frequent experience of. Which we have set forth by *Elihu* in *Job*, cap. 33. Where speaking of Gods making use of *sickness* (among other afflictions) as a means to bring men home to himself, he sheweth how upon their repenting and seeking unto him, he then manifests his power in their weakness. *When his soul draweth near unto the grave*, &c. *Then is he gracious unto him, and shall deliver him from going down into the pit*, v. 22. 24. *Lo all these things worketh God oftentimes with man, to bring back his soul from the pit*, v. 29, 30. Here is Gods power exercised and manifested. So was the power of *Christ* in healing all manner of diseases, curing the blind, and the lame, and the sick in a miraculous way. And so is the power of God often in his ordinary providences of this kind. Hereof our Apostle had experience in himself, as he tels his *Corinthians*, 2 Cor. 1. 8, 9. where speaking of some *great trouble* which happened to him in *Asia*, (probably conceived to have been some dangerous sickness) he sheweth how it lay so heavy upon him, that he was (as he saith) *pressed out of measure above strength*, in so much that he even *despaired of life*, having had *the sentence of death in himself*. Thus was he brought low, being

being past hope, as in the judgement of others, so of himself. But now in this desperate condition the Lord was pleased to step in unto him, shewing his power in his weakness, *delivering him from so great a death* (as it followeth v. 10.) Like experience many others have had, and daily have, in whose *Bodily weakness* Gods *strength* is *made perfect*.

Which also it is in extricating and delivering them from other eminent *dangers*, saving and delivering them out of the hands of their *enemies*, which were too strong for them. Hereof *David* had frequent experience, who tells us how the Lord *brought him up out of a horrible pit*, Psal. 40. 2. and how he *delivered his soul from death*, Psal. 56. 13. working for him great and wonderful deliverances. And the like had *Paul*, who acquaints *Timothy* how when he was brought before *Nero*, and was in great danger of his life, all his friends forsook him; But (saith he) *The Lord stood with me, and strengthened me*, &c. *And I was delivered out of the mouth of the Lion*, 2 Tim. 4. 17. Now here is the strength of God perfected in weakness, in working these temporal salvations for his people, when they can do nothing for themselves. This he did for his servant *David*, who setting forth the great things which his God had done for him, Psal. 18. amongst many other things tells us, v. 16, 17. *He sent from above, he took me, he drew me out of many waters. He delivered me from my strong enemy, and from them which hated me, for they were too strong for me.* And the like he had done before

Delivering them from other eminent dangers.

before for his people *Israel*, in bringing them out of *Egypt*, carrying them through the Red Sea, and through the Wilderneſſe, where he wrought many temporal ſalvations for them: All which he did for the manifeſtation of his own power, which was perfected in their weakneſſe. *Nevertheleſſe he ſaved them for his Names ſake; that he might make his mighty power to be known*, Pſal. 106. 8. which in and by theſe deliverances it was. *Thy right hand, O Lord, is become glorious in power* (ſaith *Moſes* in his ſong, made and ſung by him and the people upon that great and wonderful deliverance which God had wrought for them, in bringing them through the Red Sea, where their enemies, the *Egyptians*, purſuing them, were drowned) Exod. 15.6.

Supporting them in their ſufferings.

To theſe we may add thoſe other *temporal Infirmities* which Gods people here are ſubject to, and that more then others, their ſufferings in their *eſtates*, *good names*, *Liberties*, by *Croſſes*, and *Loſſes*, *Reproaches*, *Reſtraints*, &c. Here alſo is the ſtrength of God perfected in their weakneſſe, in ſupporting and delivering them; bearing up their ſpirits under them, and giving them a comfortable iſſue out of them. All which this our Apoſtle had great and gracious experience of; who tells us (as you have before heard) in the verſe after the Text, that when he was *weak*, then was he *ſtrong*. The more he was outwardly preſſed with thoſe *Infirmities* which he there ſpeaketh of, *Reproaches*, *Neceſſities*, *Perſecutions*, *Diſtreſſes*, he was the more inwardly ſtrong, ſtrong in ſpirit, and the more inabled

inabled to do ſervice to God and his Church: Thus is divine ſtrength made perfect in the weakneſſe of the *Outward Man*.

And ſo it is in thoſe of the *Inward*. Where firſt look we upon the *actual Infirmities* of Saints, their ſlips, their falls, their ſinful failings, which (as you have heard) are ſometimes dangerous, as falls are to the Bodies of men, whereby they become lame, or weak (as *Mephibosheth* was by his fall from his nurſes arms.) Such are *ſcandalous ſins*, which Gods own Children, through the infirmity of the fleſh, ſometimes fall into. Hereby it may be the ſoul is for the preſent much weakned, being (as it were) put out of joint, ſo as they walk heavily and lamely. But herein is divine ſtrength made perfect, in reſtoring and raiſing them up again from theſe falls, reſtoring them to former ſtrength and comfort, ſtrengthening and inabling them to go on in their former courſe as vigorouſly, if not more vigorouſly then before. An inſtance whereof we have in *Peter*, who having denied his Lord and Maſter thrice, yet afterwards was ſo ſtrengthened, that he confeſſed him unto the death, which he ſuffered for him, ſo *glorifying God by his death*, as his Maſter had fore-told him that he ſhould do, Joh. 20. 19. Here is *divine ſtrength made perfect in humane weakneſs*.

2. In Spiritual weakneſſes.

1. In Actual Infirmities.

Raiſing them up, being fallen.

2. And ſo it is when Chriſtians, being vveak in grace, are of themſelves ſubject to fall, and unable to do and ſuffer vvhat God calls them to, here is the ſtrength of God put forth, his povver exerciſed

2. In Habitual Infirmity, ſupporting and ſtrengthening them.

exercised and manifested, in supporting and strengthening them; making them not onely to *stand*, keeping them from *falling*, howvever from falling away *Totally* and *Finally*, which of themselves they are subject to; but also to *walk*. As our *Saviour* did to that *impotent person*, who having had an Infirmity thirty eight years, was come to the pool of *Bethesda* for cure, to whom he said, *Rise, take up thy bed and walk*, Joh. 5. 8. The like cure is God pleased to work upon poor *impotent souls*, inabling them by the power of his Spirit to *rise* and *walk*; by his strength carrying them on in the course of their *Active and Passive obedience*, strengthening them to that four-fold Act before spoken of, to *Resist Temptations*, to *Subdue Corruption*, to *performe duties*, to *endure sufferings*. Here also is divine strength made perfect in humane weaknesse. But having insisted upon these severally before, I shall not now again reflect upon them.

Thus I have done with the second of these senses, which the words in the Text do properly bear; shewing you how Gods strength is said to be made perfect in *weaknesse it self*, which is a Proper object for it to work upon; *Ubi materiam habet se exercendi* (as *Calvin* explains it) where it findeth fit *matter* to put forth and exercise it self upon, and to manifest it self by. I shall now passe to the third and last, of which but a word.

2. Gods strength made perfect in the sense of weaknesse;

My strength is made perfect in weaknesse; as in weaknesse it self, so *in the sense of weaknesse*. So it is, men are never so thorowly sensible and apprehensive

apprehenſive of Gods *power*; as when they are moſt ſenſible of their own *weakneſſe*; *neither have they ever a right taſte of it* (as *Calvin* hath it) *unleſſe firſt they have been convinced of their own need*; *And withal* (as he goeth on) *they are ready preſently to forget the force and efficacy of it, unleſſe they be continually or frequently, exerciſed with the ſenſe and feeling of their own infirmitie.* By this means they come to have a clear and experimental knowledge of the power of God, which is thus put forth and exerciſed upon themſelves, in ſupporting, ſuccouring, ſtrengthening them, and working deliverance for them. And being thus ſenſible of it, now they are brought to a free *acknowledgement* of it, ſo as to give unto God the praiſe and glory of it. So was it with *Job*, who having had ſuch experience of his own *weakneſs* in thoſe many and great conflicts wherewith he had been exerciſed, and withal of Gods *power* in ſupporting of him in them, and giving him ſo comfortable an iſſue out of them, by this means he came to have a more clear and full knowledge of God, then ever he had before. *I have heard of thee* (ſaith he) *by the hearing of the ears, but now mine eye ſeeth thee*, Job 42. 5. He had before heard others ſpeak highly of God, of his infinite wiſdome, and power, but now having had ſuch experience of it in himſelf, in his own weakneſſe, he came to ſee what before he had onely heard of, to be more ſenſible of it, then ever before; whereupon he was ready to confeſſe and acknowledge it. Which he doth v. 2. *I know* (ſaith he,

Men being then moſt ſenſible of it.

Nam ne homines quidem eam guſtant, niſi prius neceſſitatis ſuæ fuerint convicti: Et ſtatim obliviſcuntur quid valeat, niſi aſſiduè infirmitatis ſuæ ſenſu exerceantur. Calvin Com. in Text.

speaking unto God) *that thou canst do everything, and that no thought can be with-holden from thee*; (as if he had said, I do now, having had such sensible experience of thy power as I have had, acknowledge that there is nothing which thou art not able to do, and that as thy counsels are wise and just, so thou wantest not power to bring to passe whatever thou hast decreed and determined to do. Thus was Gods strength made perfect in his weakness, being by this means more clearly and fully made known to him. And upon the like account it was that the Lord here proceeded with his servant *Paul* after that manner that he did, suffering him still to lie and continue under that sad conflict, wherewith he was exercised; this he did to the end that he having had such experience of his own weakness, might be the more apprehensive and sensible of the power of God in supporting and delivering him, so as to acknowledge it, and give him the glory of it. Thus, as in *weakness it self* the power of God is manifested unto *others*, who behold it, so in the *sense of weakness* it is manifested to a *mans self*, and so becometh the more glorious in his eye. Even as when the Sun breaketh forth of a thick cloud, or the light shineth in a dark place (as that did in the *Prison* where *Peter* was, Acts 12. 7.) the eye of the beholder is hereby so much the more affected with it. But I shall not any further enlarge upon the *Doctrinal* part of this Conclusion. Come we to make some improvement of it by way of *Application*: Which (as in the former) I shall direct onely two wayes, by way of *Consolation*, *Exhortation*.

Application.

1. By

1. By way of *Conſolation*: Let this be put as another *Ingredient* into this *Soveraigne Cordial*, and be made uſe of for the bearing up the *drooping ſpirits* of all the Lords people under whatever *Conflicts*, in the midſt of whatever ſtraits and troubles his Providence ſhall bring them into. Which let it be applied firſt in a *General*, then in a *Particular* way. *Uſe* 1. Contolation.

1. In a *General* way, in reference to the *Miſtical Body* the *Church*. To her, are Gods Miniſters, as occaſion is offered, to ſpeak a word of Comfort. *Speak comfortably to Hieruſalem*, (ſaith the Lord to his Prophets,) Iſa. 40. 1. And this let me do at preſent. So it is, the Church, being here in a militant ſtate, is ſubject to many Conflicts. In which, having many and potent enemies, it may be brought to a weak and low condition. So it was in the *Egyptian* and *Babylonian* Captivity; In which latter the people of the *Jewes* were but like thoſe *dry bones*, which the Prophet *Ezekiel* ſaw in his Viſion, Ezek. 37. 1, 2. An *Emblem* very fitly repreſenting and ſetting forth the deplorable ſtate of the Church at that time, as we have it afterwards interpreted and applyed, v. 11. *And he ſaid unto me, Son of man theſe bones are the whole houſe of Iſrael: Behold, they ſay, Our bones are dried, and our hope is loſt, we are cut off for our parts.* And ſo was it afterwards under the heathen *Roman Emperours*; Where *the great red Dragon ſtood before the woman, to devour her* 1. Directed, firſt, in a General way, in reference to the Church.

child assoon as it was born, Rev. 12. 4. Satan, making use of those cruel and bloody Instruments, opposed the Church of Christ, endeavouring utterly to destroy and root it off from the earth, not sparing any that made a profession of the name of Christ. And so hath it since been, and at this day is, under their Successors, the *Romish Antichrist*; Under whose Tyranny we read how the *two witnesses* were slain, Rev. 11. 7, 8. *The beast that ascendeth out of the bottomlesse pit shall make warre against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them; And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great City*, &c. Such havock hath this *Beast* (so called for his savage cruelty) made of the faithful servants of God, who have in their generations given testimony to his truth, and in special of the *Ministers* of Christ, who are his *witnesses* after a special manner, as Christ saith his Apostles should be, Acts 1. 8; exercising all kind of cruelty upon them. And this towards the end of his reign he shall do more then ever; that being the *Devils mode*; as we have it set forth, Rev. 12. 12. *For the Devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.* Such is the Churches condition, sometimes very weak and low. But let not this discourage and dishearten those that, being true Members of this Body, do sympathize with it, and wish well to it, praying for the peace and prosperity of it. Though *Jerusalems* strength be small, yet she hath a *Strong God* to protect her, who will make his strength perfect in her weakneſſe.

neſſe. And therefore fear not. So we may hear the Lord animating and encouraging his people, the people of the *Jewes* in their *Babyloniſh Captivity*, Iſa. 41. when they were in a low condition, not able to do any thing for themſelves, having little hope of ever ſeeing *Jeruſalem* again, of ever being reſtored to their former ſtate; yet now he bids them not fear: *Fear thou not* (ſaith he, v. 10.) *for I am with thee; Be not diſmayed, for I am thy God, I will ſtrengthen thee; yea I will help thee; yea I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteouſneſſe.* And again, v. 14, 15. *Fear not thou worm Jacob, and ye men of Iſrael, I will help, ſaith the Lord, and thy Redeemer, the holy One of Iſrael; Behold, I will make thee a new ſharp threſhing inſtrument having teeth; thou ſhalt threſh the Mountains, and beat them ſmall; and ſhalt make the hills as chaffe.* Such was the Churches condition then, ſhe was but a *worm*, trodden upon by every foot, very contemptible and deſpicable in the eyes of the World; yet the Lord willeth her not to fear, in as much as he, being her Guardian, vvould ſo aſſiſt and ſtrengthen her, as that ſhe ſhould be able, not onely to vvithſtand, but to conquer and ſubdue all her enemies, though never ſo many, never ſo mighty. Such a Reſtauration the Lord maketh promiſe of unto them; he vvould raiſe them out of that lovv eſtate. Thoſe dead and dry bones ſhould live again. So he vvilleth his Prophet *Ezekiel* to propheſie over them, Ezek. 37. 4. *Say unto them, O ye dry bones, hear the word of the Lord: Thus ſaith the*

Lord God unto these bones, Behold I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live. And I will lay sinewes upon you, and will bring up flesh upon you, &c. God would have his people know, and be assured of it, that by his power, his strength put forth in their weakness, they should be restored to, and established in their former estate. This he promised, and accordingly performed unto them. And the like he hath done and will do to his *Church* under the *Gospel*, to which that afore said Prophesie of the Prophet *Isaiah* is by the generality of Expositors conceived to have an eye; as divers others of his Prophesies clearly have, which set forth the flourishing state of the Church under the Gospel. So doth that known one, Isa. 2. 2. *And it shall come to passe* (saith he) *in the last dayes, that the mountain of the Lords house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all Nations shall flow unto it.* Which cannot well be understood of the Church under the *Old Testament*, which consisted onely of one Nation, the *Jewes*, but of that under the *New*, where *Jewes* and *Gentiles* shall meet together for the compleating of it, and making it a full and a glorious Body; which it shall be, being in regard of the spiritual glory of it advanced above all the Kingdoms of the world. Many other *Prophesies* of like nature we meet withal in that, and other of the Prophets, wherein God hath promised to do great and wonderful things for his Church in the latter dayes. Now having such *Promises*, let

not

not the present state of it; how weak and mean so ever it be, be any discouragement to any that wish well to it. That God who hath made these promises, being a *God of power*, is able to performe them. It matters not though the eye of *Reason* cannot discern how, in what way, and by what means this work should be effected, or by what Instruments so great a mercy shall be conveyed. It is enough for *faith* to rest upon, what the Lord here saith, *My strength is made perfect in weakness*. Humane weakness is no obstruction to divine strength. That God to whom belongeth wisdome and power, can effect and bring to passe great things by weak means, if not without them, (as before you have heard.) That *stone* which *Nebuchadnezzar* in his dream saw *cut out of the mountain without hands*, is said to have *smote the Image, and to become a great mountain, and to have filled the whole earth*, Dan 2. 35. The Lord *Jesus*, who was conceived and born of a *Virgin*, not by the way of natural generation, as all others have been and are, but by the *over-shadowing of the Holy Ghost*, the immediate power of God, in his entrance into, and continuance in the world, he was mean and despicable, but now he is advanced to be *King of Kings, and Lord of Lords*, the Universal Monarch of the World. And as it was, and is with his *Person*, so shall it be with his *Kingdome*, his *Church*, which though but a *little stone*, small in the beginning of it, shall yet *smite the Image*, *the Image of the Beast*, Antichrist, with his adherents, breaking in pieces

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ces all oppoſite powers. Which having done, it ſhall then ſo increaſe and multiply, as that it ſhall *fill the whole earth*, exceeding all other Empires whatever. Thus ſhall the ſtrength of God, and Jeſus Chriſt, be made perfect in his Churches weakneſſe.

The Day of ſmall things not to be deſpiſed.

And therefore let none now *deſpiſe the day of ſmall things*. With this the Lord upbraids ſome of the *Jewes*, who when the foundation of the Temple was laid by *Zerubbabel*, they ſeeing ſuch weak Inſtruments ſet a work, and the work going on ſo ſlowly, they feared that thoſe poor and ſmall beginnings would have no good endings, but that the deſign would come to naught, he reproveth them for giving way to ſuch doubts and fears, Zach. 4. 10. *For* (ſaith he) *who hath deſpiſed the day of ſmall things? For they ſhall rejoyce, and ſhall ſee the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel.* Notwithſtanding all their diſdain and diffidence, they ſhould ſee vvhat they looked not for, and have cauſe to rejoyce, when they ſhould ſee the work carried on to perfection. Thus doth *God*, (as our *Annotations* obſerves upon thoſe words) *out of meaneſt principles raiſe matters of great moment.* Such was the beginning of that material Temple, being undertak'n by ſuch weak hands, yet the Lord promiſeth that it ſhould be carried on, and that in deſpite of all oppoſition. *Who art thou, O great Mountain?* (ſaith he, v. 7.) *Before Zerubbabel thou ſhalt become a plain, And he ſhall bring forth the head ſtone thereof with ſhoutings.* And again, v. 9. *The hands of Zerubbabel have laid*

laid the foundation of this house, his hands also shall finish it. Thus did the Lord begin and carry on that *Temple work*, not by any humane power, or policy; but by his own strength. So he told *Zerubbabel* that he would do, v. 6. *Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.* And what the Lord there foretold him touching the *material Temple*, shall be made good in the building of the *spiritual Temple*, the Church (of which the Temple was a Type.) This work being put into the hands of *Jesus Christ* (of whom also *Zerubbabel* was a Type) it shall be carried on in the like way. Not as wordly *Empires* are; which for the most part are got and kept by force of Armes; but *by the Spirit of the Lord*; by his strength made perfect in weakness. Which (as our *Annotator* writing upon the tenth verse of that Chapter, maketh use of it) is the singular comfort of the Church in all ages, and at this very day.

2. In a Particular way, to every drooping Spirit labouring under the sense of its own weakness.

And as it speaketh comfort to the Church in general, so to every *particular member* of it that droopeth under the sense and apprehension of his own *infirmity* and weakness, whether *Temporal* or *Spiritual*. Each of which have an influence upon the *soul*. So have *Temporal infirmities*, such as are incident to the outward man, as Sicknesses, Losses, Crosses, Sufferings. These being sore and grievous to the flesh, they (as the Prophet *Jeremy* saith of the *Sword* and *War*, Jer. 4. 10.) *reach unto the soul*. Being bitter, they *reach unto the heart* (as he hath it again, v. 18) filling it with sorrows and fears, breeding

breeding agonies and distempers in the soul. But much more *spiritual Infirmities*, the weakness of grace, the want of ability to do what is required in order to salvation, as to *Resist Temptation*, *subdue Corruption*, *perform Duties*, *endure Sufferings*. This cannot but come near a gracious soul, which is truly apprehensive and sensible of it. So it did this our Apostle, whom upon this account we hear crying out, Ταλαίπωρος ἄνθρωπος, *O wretched miserable man that I am*, Rom. 7. 24. But let not any of these so seize upon a regenerate soul, as to cause a despondency in it. Thou art *weak*, and thy fainting which thou art subject to, shews thee so to be. *If thou faint in the day of adversity, thy strength is small*, Prov. 24. 10. But however thou art weak in thy self, yet thou art, or maist be strong in thy *God*, whose *strength is made perfect in weakness*. And therefore comfort thy self in him. So *David* is said to do in that great strait wherein he was at *Ziglag*, *He encouraged* (or *comforted*) *himself in the Lord his God*, 1 Sam. 30. 6. And the like do thou, having God for thy God, now set his strength against thy weakness. Remembring that the weaker thou art in thy self, thou art the fitter object for him to exercise and put forth his strength upon, which shall be made the more glorious in and by thy weakness. And therfore being weak in thy self, be strong in thy God. Is it so, that thou art reduced to *straits*, great straits, not knowing what to do, yet faint not, remembring and believing what thou hast heard, that this

this is the fittest season for God to put forth his strength, to shew his power. *Ubi humanum deficit ibi incipit divinum auxilium.* Where humane help ends, divine begins. And therefore what ever thy condition be, yet faint not, fear not. *I will trust and not be afraid, for the Lord Jehovah is my strength* (saith the believing soul,) Isa. 12.2. *God is our refuge and strength* (saith the Church) *a very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the Sea,* Psal. 46.1, 2. A truly brave and heroick resolution, well becoming a Christian, who hath made *God* his strength. Which let all those who have him for *their God* do, being strong in him. *Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might,* Eph. 6.10. So doing, now maist thou say without boasting that thou art strong. *Let the weak say, I am strong,* Joel 3.10. Though weak in thy self, yet strong in thy God. This by way of *Consolation.*

In the second place by way of *Exhortation,* or *Instruction,* whereof divers *Branches.* *Use.* 2. Exhortation, or Instruction.

1. Is Gods strength made perfect in weakness, then *be we weak,* weak (I mean) in our selves, truly apprehensive and sensible of our own weakness. This Gods children sometimes are not, not so sensible hereof as they ought to be. And upon this account it is that God is pleased to exercise them in that manner that he doth, both in the outward and inward man, with *Afflictions* and *Temptations,* bringing them into, and 1. Christians to be weak in themselves.

and holding them under some sad and sore conflict, that so having experience of their own weakness, they may come to know themselves, and so not to *think of themselves more highly then they ought to think*, (which our Apostle bids Christians to be ware of, Rom. 12. 3.) By this means he preventeth or cureth that spiritual *Tympany* of the Soul, which the best of Saints are subject to; *hiding Pride from them.* This *Elihu* tells *Job* that God doth sometimes by *dreams* and *visions*, revealing to a man his own vileness. *Then* (saith he) *he openeth the ears of men, and sealeth their instruction; that he may with-draw man from his purposes, and hide pride from man*; Job 33. 17. that is, keep him from doing the evil which he intended, and from being inordinately lifted up in himself, which probably *Elihu* apprehended his friend *Job* to be guilty of, or subject to. And this he doth oft-times by *Afflictions* and *Temptations*; herein leaving men to the experience of their own weakness, he *hideth pride* from them, keepeth them from being inordinately lifted up in themselves, exalted above measure. Upon this account it was (as you have heard) that the Lord proceeded with his servant *Paul* after this manner that he did, letting Satan loose upon him to *buffet* him, and continuing him under that Conflict, notwithstanding his frequent and earnest solicitations for a release; This he did, that he might *hide pride* from him, keep him from that spiritual pride which he was in danger of, from being *exalted above measure, through that abun-*

dance

dance of revelations, which he had above any other of his time, (as he tells us in the verse next but one before the Text,) that hereby being made sensible of his own weakness, his soul might be preserved and kept in a humble frame and temper. Now then, for the preventing of these and the like trials, labour we to be truly and throughly sensible of our own weakness. Our *spiritual weakness* (I mean). As for other weaknesses, the weaknesses of the outward man, weakness of body, or weakness of estate, &c. these *Temporal Infirmities* we are sensible enough of (and oft-times too much.) Be we so of our *spiritual weakness*, the weakness of the inward man; our inability to *walk* or *stand*; to walk in the wayes of God, to stand in his grace. How that we are *not sufficient of our selves to think any thing as of our selves* (which the Apostle tells us the best of Saints are not, 2 *Cor.* 3. 5.) How subject of our selves we are every moment, not onely to *slip*, but to *fall*; and that not onely into particular sins, but to fall away *Totally* and *Finally* from the grace of God. Such is our *weakness*. And this see that we be convinced of, and acquainted with; that so, being throughly sensible, and continually mindful hereof, our soul may be kept in a humble & lowly frame and temper, so as we may do that which the Lord expecteth & requireth from us, *walk humbly with our God*, Micah. 6. 8. Now, and not till now, are we fit objects for God in a gracious way to exercise his power, to put forth and shew his strength upon; which is *made perfect in weakness*, in the *sense of weakness*.

2. And

2. Making God their ſtrength.

2. And being thus ſenſible of our own weakneſſe, now look out of our ſelves unto him to whom belongeth ſtrength, *making God our ſtrength*. So did *Dauid*, who often ſo calls him. *I will love thee, O Lord, my ſtrength*, Pſal. 18. 1. *Let the words of my mouth, and the meditations of my heart be acceptable in thy ſight, O Lord my ſtrength and my Redeemer*, Pſal. 19. 14. And ſo doth the Church, Iſa. 12. 2. *The Lord Jehovah is my ſtrength*. And this do we, not onely *calling*, but *making* him ſo. Which do we by *leaning* upon him. Thus doth the *impotent* man make his *ſtaffe* his *ſtrength*, by *leaning* upon it; which being ſenſible of his own weakneſſe he doth, as the Patriarch *Jacob* upon his ſick-bed is ſaid to have done, Heb. 11. 21. Thus do we in the ſenſe of our own weakneſſe lean upon our God, truſting in him. *My God, my ſtrength, in whom I will truſt* (ſaith *Dauid*) Pſal. 18. 2. Reſting upon him, making him our *Rock*. *The Lord is my Rock*, Pſal. 18. 2. The Rock of our ſtrength. *The Rock of my ſtrength is in God*, Pſal. 62. 7. Flying unto him, and taking hold of him by faith. Which do we ſo much the more ſtrongly, by how much the weaker we feel our ſelves. So doth the impotent perſon, who maketh uſe of a ſtaffe, the more feeble he is, the more weight he layeth upon it. And thus do we, being weak in other things be not weak in *faith*. This was *Abrahams* ſtrength, when he was weak in his *Body*, that being *dead* (as the Apoſtle ſaith of him) yet he was not *weak*

in faith, Rom. 4. 19. ſtill he believed and reſted upon the promiſe which God had made to him. The like do we; having Gods promiſe for his ſupport and aſſiſtance, reſt upon him, and truſt in him for the performance of it. Making him the ſtrength of our life. *The Lord is the ſtrength of my life* (ſaith *David*) Pſal. 71. 16. *Living* and *walking* in his ſtrength. Which do we at all times, through our whole courſe, the courſe of our *Active* and *Paſſive* Obedience.

1. In our *Active Obedience*; in performing of *Duties*; here walk not in our own ſtrength, which (as you have heard) being truſted to, will be found to be no other but weakneſſe, but in the ſtrength of the Lord. This was *Davids* reſolution, *I will go in the ſtrength of the Lord God*, Pſal. 71. 16. Thus do we, in what ever ſervices we go about, go upon them in the ſtrength of the Lord. Being ſenſible of our own weakneſſe, look up unto him for ſtrength, that he would ſtrengthen our hands. So prayeth *Nehemiah*, (as before you heard) cap. 6. v. 9. being about a great work, the building of *Jeruſalem*, the walls whereof were ſet up, but not quite finiſhed, and finding ſome oppoſition, he looks up unto his God for his further aſſiſtance; *Now therefore, O God* (ſaith he) *ſtrengthen my hands*. And the like do we, going about Gods work, the word which he calleth us to, and doing it in obedience unto him, now look up unto him for ſtrength. Which whileſt we do, doubt not of his aſſiſtance, but be ſtrong in him. Thus the Lord animates thoſe who went about the re-

1. In their Active Obedience, walking in his ſtrength.

building of his Temple, *Zerubbabel* and *Joshua*, the *Prince* and the *Priest* (both which are to joyn hands in *Temple-work*,) with the rest of the people that should be assistants to them, *Hag.* 2. 4. *Yet now be strong, O Zerubbabel, saith the Lord, and be strong, O Joshua, and be strong all the people of the Land, saith the Lord, and work, for I am with you, saith the Lord of hosts.* And let the like be said to all the Lords people, whether *Publick* or *Privat* persons. Whilest you go about Gods work, be ye strong in him, being comfortably assured that he will strengthen your hearts and hands, inabling you to perform what service it is that he calleth you to.

2. In their Passive Obedience looking up unto him for strength.

2. And doing this in our *Active*, do we the like in our *Passive Obedience*; as in our *doing*, so in our *suffering* work. Is it so, that God by his providence is pleased to exercise us with any kind of trials, bringing us into straits, so as we know not what to do, which way to look, now look we *upwards*. Even as a man that is cast into a deep *pit* (as *Joseph* was by his brethren, Gen. 37. 24. (not knowing how to get out, or which way else to look; he looketh upwards. So let the Lords people do, being by his providence cast into a *pit* (as *Heman* complains that he was, Psal. 88. 6. *Thou hast laid me in the lowest pit, in darkness in the deeps,*) brought into great straits, now let them *look up*. This *Idolaters* are said to do, Isa. 8. 21. *It shall come to passe, that when they shall be hungry, they shall fret themselves, and curse their King and their God, and look upwards.* Their *Idol* not succouring them, they

they shall look up to heaven, to see if any aid would come from thence. And this let all true Worshippers do; creature helps failing them, let them now look upwards, lifting up their eyes and hearts unto their God. *Nevertheless lift I up mine eyes, O thou that dwellest in the heavens,* (saith *David*) Psal. 123. 1. Thus look we up unto our God; presenting our condition unto him, imploring his help and assistance, that he would shew his power, and make his *strength perfect in our weakness*. This do we in *publick Calamities*, when it goeth ill with the *Church*, now pray we as the *Church* doth, Isa. 51. 9. *Awake, awake, put on strength, O arme of the Lord, awake as in the ancient dayes, in the generations of old.* And as the Psalmist, Psal. 80. 1, 2. *Give ear O Shepherd of Israel, &c. Stirre up thy strength, and come and save us.* And the like do we in our *private distresses*. In all our *Conflicts*, of what kind soever they be, whether *outward*, or *inward*, *temporal*, or *spiritual*, still call in God to our assistance and help; *making him our strength*, seeking unto him, and trusting in him.

And thus making him our strength, now *wait upon him*. This all the *Creatures* are said to do in a *natural* way; having their subsistence in him and from him, they wait upon him. *The eyes of all wait upon thee*, Psal. 145. 15. And this do we in a *spiritual* way. As at all times, so in our straits and trials, looking up unto God, and committing our selves to him, now let us wait upon him, waiting for a gracious Answer to our prayers. And this do we *Quietly*, and *Patiently*.

3. In straits waiting upon him.

Quietly, not murmuring against him.

1. *Quietly*, not *murmuring* or repining. This was the ſin of the *Iſraelites* in the Wilderneſſe; not having what they deſired and expected, *they murmured againſt the Lord*, Exod. 16. 8. A great ſin in them, highly provoking the wrath of God againſt them. Take heed we be not guilty of the like. *Neither murmurre ye, as ſome of them alſo murmured, and were deſtroyed of the deſtroyer*, 1 Cor. 10. 10. Nor yet quarrelling with God, diſputing with him about the reaſon of his diſpenſations and dealings with us. *Do all things* (ſaith the Apoſtle) *without murmurings*, or *diſputings*, Phil. 2. 14. *Nay, but O man, who art thou that replieſt againſt God?* Rom. 9. 20. This let not us dare to do, as not touching his *eternal Decrees* (of which the Apoſtle there ſpeaketh) ſo not concerning his *Temporal diſpenſations*. Let not us, being but as *Clay* in the hands of the *Potter*, ſay unto him, *why haſt thou made me thus?* Why haſt thou brought me into this ſtate and condition? But let us quietly wait upon him to ſee what iſſue he will make. *It is good that a man ſhould both hope and quietly wait for the ſalvation of the Lord*, Lam. 3. 27.

In Publick Calamities.

This do we in the midſt of *publick Calamities*, troubles, perſecutions; not knowing what to do, now hearken to the advice which *Moſes* gave unto the *Iſraelites* in that great ſtrait wherein they were, when being come to the red Sea they ſaw the Waters before them, the Enemy behind them, and the Mountains on each ſide of them, not knowing what to do; Now (ſaith he) *ſtand ſtill and ſee the ſalvation of the Lord*, Exod. 14. 13.

13. This do we in the like caſes; being reduced to great ſtraits, and left deſtitute of Creature ſuccours, now *Stand ſtill, Sit ſtill.* That is the Counſell which the Prophet *Iſaiah* giveth unto the People of the *Jewes* in ſuch a condition, *Iſa.* 30. 7. *Therefore have I cried concerning this thing, her ſtrength is to ſit ſtill*; quitely to wait upon God for h s Protection and aſſiſtance. And this let the Lords people do in the like caſes. Which yet let it be warily and rightly underſtood. Not but that they may and ought to make uſe of lawful and warrantable wayes and means for their ſecurity, where God offers them to them. But not of ſuch as are unlawful, unwarrantable, as that means was which the *Jewes* then made uſe of, in ſeeking help from forreign Nations, from the *Egyptians*, which God had expreſly forbidden them to do. Let not Chriſtians be guilty of the like. Where God leaveth them deſtitute of lawful ſuccours, let them now ſit ſtill; *entering into their Chambers.* That is the advice which the Lord by his Prophet, the Prophet *Iſaiah*, giveth unto his people, the people of the *Jewes*, Iſa. 26. 20. *Come my people, enter thou into thy Chambers, and ſhut thy doores about thee, hide thy ſelf as it were for a little moment, untill the indignation be overpaſt.* Thus vvill men do, being abroad, and ſeeing a ſtorme a coming, they vvill haſte home to their houſes, to take ſhelter there, there abiding, till it be over. And in times of danger, vvhen the houſe is beſet, they vvill retire into the ſecreteſt, and ſureſt rooms of it, ſhutting and barring the doors, making

all fast after them. And the like course are Gods people to take, fore-seeing his judgements a coming upon the Nation, or place where they live, they are by faith to enter into the Chambers of his Protection, and committing themselves unto him, quietly to wait for his salvation. Thus did *Noah*, fore-seeing the *Deluge* which was coming upon the world, he with his family entered into the *Ark*, according as God had directed him, Gen. 7. 17. there abiding and riding it out, though having neither Saile, Rudder, nor Anchor to make use of until the Flood was abated, and the dry land appeared for him to land upon. And the like did the *Israelites* in *Egypt* (to whose practise that Text of the Prophet *Isaiah* is conceived to allude;) Having warning of the destroying Angels passing through the Land, they kept close within their houses; Exod. 12. 12. And the like let the Lords people do in the like cases. Fore-seeing publick Judgements a coming, let them betake themselves to the Ark of divine protection, retiring themselves, seeking God by unfeigned humiliation and repentance, so quietly waiting for the *day of his power*, the time when he will put forth his strength in succouring and relieving them.

In private Distresses.

And what we do in *publick Calamities*, do we the like in *private distresses*. Here, what ever our condition be, taking notice in whose hands we are, with whom we have to do, the great God to whom belongeth *power*, both Ἐξουσία & Δυνάμις, *Potestas & Potentia*, *Authority* and *Strength*, so as he both may and can dispose of

us

us as it pleaſeth him, let us quietly ſubmit unto him, and wait upon him. *I was dumb* (ſaith *David*) *and opened not my mouth, becauſe thou Lord didſt it*, Pſal. 39. 9. Thus wait we upon our God *quietly*.

2. And as *Quietly*, ſo *Patiently*. *If we hope for that we ſee not, then do we with patience wait for it*, Rom. 8. 25. This do we in our ſtraits and troubles, hoping for a ſeaſonable and comfortable iſſue, which God hath made promiſe of to his people, 1 Cor 10. 13. Let us now with patience wait upon him for it. *Reſt in the Lord, and wait patiently for him*, Pſal. 37. 7. As not murmurring againſt him, ſo not *limiting* of him. This is one thing which we find charged upon the *Iſraelites* in the Wilderneſſe, *Pſal.* 78. 41. *They turned back and tempted God, and limited the Holy One of Iſrael.* They limited his *power*, appointing what he ſhould do, and when he ſhould do it for them. This take we heed of. Whileſt in our troubles and ſufferings we wait upon God, let us not dare to limit him, whether as to the *manner* or *time*, *how* or *when* he ſhall deliver us. It was a deſperate ſpeech of that impious King of *Samaria*, when having for a time waited for ſome ſuccour from the Lord, which the Prophet *Eliſha* is conceived to have made promiſe of, his expectation was not anſwered, but the famine increaſed more and more, he breaketh forth into that paſſionate and blaſphemous language, *Behold* (ſaith he) *this evil is of the Lord, what ſhould I wait for the Lord any longer?* 2 Kings 6. *ult.* What he

2. Patiently, not limiting him.

ſpake, do not we dare to think, But let the Pſalmiſts reſolve be our rule and practiſe, Pſal. 123. 2. *Behold, as the eyes of ſervants look unto the hand of their maſters, and as the eyes of of a maiden unto the hand of her miſtreſſe, ſo our eyes wait upon the Lord God untill he have mercy upon us.* Thus looking up unto God, let us *wait* upon him. Having his *promiſe*, wait for the *performance*. *The viſion is yet for an appointed time; but at the end it ſhall ſpeak and will not lie; though it tarry, wait for it, becauſe it will ſurely come, it will not tarry*, viz. not beyond the time apppointed, Hab. 2. 3.

4. Chriſtians thus waiting, to reſt aſſured of Gods perfecting his ſtrength in their weakneſſe.

Which let us reſt aſſured of. Thus looking up unto, truſting in, and waiting upon our God, now doubt not but he will in his time make that good to us, which here he maketh promiſe of to his ſervant *Paul, make his ſtrength perfect in our weakneſſe*; manifeſting it in *ſupporting and delivering* us.

1. In Supporting them.

1. In *ſupporting* of us. Hereof *David* had comfortable experience, as we may hear him often acknowledging it. *Thy right hand hath holden me up* (ſaith he) Pſal. 18. 35. *By thee have I been holden up from the wombe*, Pſal. 71. 6. And the like will the Lord do for his people who truſt in him, ſhewing his power in their weakneſſe. *He giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no might, he increaſeth ſtrength*, Iſa. 40. 29. *The ſalvation of the righteous is of the Lord, he is their ſtrength in time of trouble*, Pſal. 37. 39. Strengthening them in the *inward* man, inabling them as to do, ſo to ſuffer what he calleth them to. Thus whileſt he caſteth them down

down with one hand, he holdeth them up with the other. Whileſt the one hand is *upon* them, the other is *under* them. *His left hand is under my head*, Cant. 2.6. *The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlaſting armes*, Deut. 33.27.

2. And thus ſupporting us under our trials, he will alſo *deliver* us out of them. This he *can* do, and this in his own time he *will* do. *Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivereth him out of them all*, Pſal. 34. 19. *God is faithful, who will not ſuffer you to be tempted above what you are able* (through his ſtrength) *to bear, but will with the temptation alſo make a way to eſcape*; 1 Cor. 10. 13. ποιήσει ἔκβασιν; He will make an out-going, find an out-let for his people. Bringing them into ſtraits, he will find out a *door* or a *window*, to let them out at. So he did in a literal ſenſe for his ſervants *Peter* and other of the *Apoſtles*; they being cloſe priſoners, *he ſent his Angel to open the priſon doors for them, and to bring them forth*, Acts 5. 19. And the like for *Paul*, when the *Jewes* took counſel to kill him, and the Governour of *Damaſcus*, who kept the City with a garriſon, was ready to apprehend him, now in this ſtrait providence found out a *Window* and a *Basket* to let him out, and down by the wall, Acts 9. 24. 2 Cor. 11. 32, 33 Thus God hath iſſues and outlets for his people, wayes and means, to themſelves and others (it may be) unknown and unthought of, to let them out from their ſufferings. Which ſome way or other in his time he will do, putting an *end* to them. And that a

2. Delivering them.

comfortable

Making the end comfortable.

comfortable end. So he did to his ſervant *Job*. *Ye have heard of the patience of Job* (ſaith St. *James*) *and have ſeen the end of the Lord*, Jam. 5. 11. how he rewarded his patience in ſuffering, by giving him a comfortable iſſue out of it, making him an abundant recompence for his loſſes, doubling his eſtate, *giving him twice as much as he had* (as we have it) Job 42. 10. And the like will he do for thoſe who ſuffer as he did, Specially if their ſufferings be for the ſake of *Chriſt*. Now let them reſt aſſured that the end ſhall be joyous and comfortable here, or hereafter. So runs our Saviours promiſe, Matth. 19. 29. *Every one that hath forſaken houſes or lands, &c. for my names ſake ſhall receive an hundred fold* (in this life of *ſecular goods*, if good for him, or of *ſpiritual riches*, which are better) *and ſhall inherit everlaſting life*. Thus ſhall the ſtrength of God be made perfect in the weakneſſe of his ſervants, who thus *Quietly* and *Patiently* wait upon him in their ſufferings, by *Supporting* and *Delivering* of them.

5. Chriſtians to give God the glory of his ſtrength put forth in their weakneſſe.

Which having in any degree and meaſure had experience of in our ſelves; let us *give unto God the glory of it*; acknowledging his ſtrength thus made perfect in our weakneſſe. Aſcribing all, not unto our ſtrength, but his ſtrength. *Aſcribe ye ſtrength unto God* (ſaith the Pſalmiſt, ſpeaking of the great things which God had done for his Church) Pſal. 78. 34. What was done for them, it was not to be imputed to any ſtrength of their own, but to his ſtrength. *The God of Iſrael is he that giveth ſtrength, and*

power

power to his people (so it there followeth) v. 35. And the like do we, having been supported under our sufferings, and delivered out of them, now ascribe we strength unto God, giving him the glory of his *power*, herein exercised and manifested. *Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power*, that is, to receive the praise of thy power; so sing the four and twenty Elders, Rev. 4. *ult.* And herein let every of us joyn in consort with them; every of us who have tasted of this power of his (as who, but at some time, in some way or other, hath done) give we unto God the glory of his power, which he hath shewn in these gracious providences which he hath exercised towards and upon us; praising and magnifying him for it. This is a work fit and proper for *Saints* to do, to think and speak of Gods power. *Thy Saints shall bless thee O Lord*, (saith the Psalmist) *they shall speak of the glory of thy Kingdome, and talk of thy power*, Psal. 145. 11. This *David* himself was ready to do. *Come and hear all ye that fear God* (saith he) *and I will declare what he hath done for my soul*, Psal. 66. 16. And herein let him be a pattern for our imitation. Be we ready upon all occasions thus to declare and set forth the *power* of God, shewing what great things he hath done for us. And whilest we declare this unto others, confesse and acknowledge it unto him, praising, and blessing, and magnifying his name for all the manifestations of his power, in and upon us. *Be thou exalted, Lord, in thine own strength, so will we sing, and praise thy power,*

Psal.

Psal. 21. 13. *Let him that is our strength, be our Song.* So the Prophet *Isaiah* directs the Lords people to say, Isa. 12. 2. *The Lord Jehovah is my strength and my Song.* And this let us do. Having had experience of Gods power in supporting and saving us, working temporal salvations for us, now blesse and praise him for it. This was *Davids* practise, as he declares it, Psal. 59. 16. *I will sing of thy power* (saith he) *yea I will sing aloud of thy mercy in the morning, for thou hast been my defence and refuge in the day of my trouble, unto thee, my strength, will I sing.* The like do we. Forget not to give unto God the glory of his power and strength manifested in our *Temporal Salvations.* Much more in our *Eternal Salvation.* That he hath rescued us poor *lambs*, not onely *out of the paw of the Lion, and the paw of the Bear* (as *David* saith he had done him, 1 Sam. 17. 37.) delivering us from many temporal dangers, but also from the great *Goliah*, from the power of *Satan*, giving us the victory over all our spiritual enemies. And among the rest, over *death* it self. Herein hath his strength been made perfect in our weakness. Which let us thankfully acknowlege to his praise and glory. *Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ*, 1 Cor. 15. 57. *Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory*, Psal. 115. 1.

6. Christians to imitate God, exercising their strength

To these *Uses* let me add but one more, and that briefly. Is this Gods way, thus to *make his strength perfect in weakness*, let us herein propound him as a *pattern for our imitation*, doing the

the like to our *Brethren*, being merciful to them, as he is to us. *Be ye therefore merciful, as your father also is merciful*, Luke 6. 36. Exercising and putting forth the power which he giveth unto us after the like manner, in succouring and relieving, supporting, and strengthening them in their weakneſſe. It is *Jobs* ſpeech to his friend *Bildad*, who pretended to come to be a Comforter to him in his diſtreſſe. *How haſt thou holpen him that is without power? how ſaveſt thou the arme that hath no ſtrength?* Job 26. 2. what ever he pretended, *Job* in his weak and ſad condition found no relief, no comfort from him, by what ever he ſaid or did. Such *Comforters* were he and the reſt of his friends to him, *miſerable comforters* (as he calleth them) Job 16. 2. *Miſerable comforters are ye all.* Let it not be ſo with us. Do we ſee our brethren lying under any *Infirmity*, whether *Outward*, or *Inward*, let *our ſtrength be made perfect in their weakneſſe.*

in their Brethrens weakneſſes.

1. Let it ſo be in their *Outward Infirmities.* In their want of *neceſſaries*, or *conveniencies*, be ready to make ſupplies out of that ſtore which God hath given us. It had been a ſad charge, had it been true, which *Eliphaz* charged upon *Job*, Job 22. 7. *Thou haſt not given water to the weary to drink, and thou haſt with-holden bread from the hungry.* A Charge which lieth too juſtly againſt many, to whom God hath given great eſtates, yet they will afford little or nothing to the poor, who ſtand in need of meat and drink, and are ready to periſh for want of it; however, nothing proportionable to what God hath given to them.

1. In their Temporal weakneſſes, ſuccouring and relieving them.

them. So it was with churlish *Nabal*, who when *David* being in the Wildernesse, and wanting provisions for himself and his followers, sent his Messengers to him to crave some relief, he returns him this Answer, *Who is David, and who is the Son of Jesse? &c. Shall I take my bread, and my water, and my flesh that I have killed for my shearers, and give it unto men that I know not whence they be?* 1 Sam. 25. 11. Such *Nabals* there are too many every where, men who *live in prosperity* (as he is said to do v. 6.) abounding in what the world can afford them, yet let a *David* make his addresse to them, he may as soon draw water out of a flint, as find relief from them. Let it not be charged upon any of you. Remembring what your Saviour tells you in that known Text, Matth. 25. that he will say at that great day, *when he shall come in his glory, and all his Angels with him, and shall sit upon the throne of his glory*; what he will then say to those on his *right hand*, and what to those on his *left*. To the one, *Come yee blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdome prepared for you from the foundation of the world*; *For I was a hungred and ye gave me meat, and I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink*, &c. v. 34, 35. But to the other, *Depart from me ye cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels; for I was a hungred, and ye gave me no meat, I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink*, &c. v. 41, 42. which in what sense he shall speak it, he there expounds, v. 40, 45. *In as much as ye have done it* (or *not done it*) *unto the least of these my brethren, yee have done it* (or

not

not done it) *unto me.* Those who will shew no mercy to their Brethren here, how can they expect mercy from God here, or hereafter? But I shall not enlarge.

2. Thus stepping into their Temporal, do we the like to their *Spiritual Infirmities.* Being *Infirmities*, let us *bear with them*, and *bear them. We that are strong, ought to bear the infirmities of the weak*, Rom. 15. 1. Not *taking offence* at them. Much lesse *giving offence* to them, by *casting stumbling blocks* in their way, *wounding their weak Consciences*; which *Paul* was very tender and wary of, as he tells his *Corinthians*, 1 Cor. 8. 13. *Wherefore if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh whilest the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend.* And such respect have we to our weak brethren, rather abstaining from things lawful, not being necessary; then by the use of them to give offence unto their weak consciences. *It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak*, Rom. 14. 21. And whilest we take heed of being accessary to their falling, now far be it from us to *rejoyce in*, or *making any advantage of* their falls. But being fallen, put forth our hand and do what we can to raise them up. *Brethren* (saith the Apostle) *if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such a one with the Spirit of meekness*, Gal. 6. 1. Thus let the *strong* help the *weak*. Not discouraging or disheartning them, but *comforting* and *strengthening* them. That is one thing which *Paul* exhorts his *Thessalonians* to, 1 Thes. 5. 14. *Now we exhort you brethren* (saith he)

2. In their spiritual weaknesses bearing with them, and strengthening them.

he) &c. *Comfort the feebleminded support the weak.* And the Prophet *Isaiah* calleth upon the Lords people to do the like, Isa. 35. 3,4. *Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirme the feeble knees; Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not.* Thus he willeth, as Gods *Prophets*, his *Ministers* in special, who are by their Office (as you have heard) *Sons of Consolation*; so all other true believers, to be thus officious and helpful each to other, comforting and strengthening their weak brethren, whose hearts and spirits are ready to faint under the sense and apprehension of their own weakness; or by reason of any evils felt or feared; by acquainting them with Gods promises, their own experiences, so ministring to them what *Cordials* may be proper for them, for the supporting and strengthening them. This doth our God for us; In our *weaknesse* he putteth forth his *power*, then *making his strength perfect.* And the like do we to others, as God shall give ability and opportunity. And thus have I now, through the assistance of *divine grace*, and *strength made perfect in weaknesse*, done with this useful *Subject*, which having finished, I shall now make use of *Pauls* farewel to his Brethren at *Miletum*, Acts 20. 32. *Commending you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.*

F I N I S.

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